

AGE OF ARTHUR

Dark ages roleplaying. Powered by Fate



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Wordplay Games

AGE OF ARTHUR

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Chapter 1- Introductions

What is this book?

Age of Arthur is a role-playing game for playing heroic adventures against impossible odds in the war ravaged lands of ancient Britannia. Apart from dice, pen and paper and some friends, everything you need to play is found in this small book. In this small package is unlimited potential. Keep it safe.

Who is Arthur?

Arthur the legendary king and folk hero resonates through history as a great leader who ruled his kingdom wisely, bringing peace and stability at a time of chaos. The whispers of a historical figure have grown into legend and evolved over the ages, particularly embellished later by Sir Thomas Malory's 15th Century translation of the 13th Century French Romance tales, providing us with the abiding image of Arthur as the medieval king with his knights of the round table set in a time of high chivalry.

Our Arthur is one rooted in the history of his time. He was a Celtic warlord who rose to prominence at a time of crisis, unifying the Romano British kingdoms against the encroaching Saxons. Through his inspired leadership and the heroics of those that stood with him, he delayed the inevitable final outcome for a generation. He was a high king whose territory was defined by the kingdoms that came to his banner and pledged their allegiance to him. They were in a fight for survival and to keep their lands their own. Our Arthur is the last light of a fading Britannia that is slipping into the shadow of the Dark Ages.

We have not felt constrained by our historical Arthur. Unashamedly we have knowingly added elements of later romance into the story of our hero and his times. Magic, glamour and forgotten gods have been lightly dusted throughout as well. Surely in those far off times these were just as real as our technology is today?

What we provide is a starting point for your Arthur. Nothing is set in stone, not even a sword. Might one of you become Arthur, either in name or perhaps in role? Perhaps you will become the high king and warlord that unites the restless British into a cohesive force to counter the Saxon incursions? What if you take Arthur out of your story? Might the British kingdoms' decline be accelerated as they are taken apart piecemeal? Or might

one of you unlock the old magic of Britannia, unleash the Fae, or find another way to drive the invaders into the sea?

Who will your Arthur be?

What is this game?

This game provides rules to resolve conflicts and challenges that form part of the shared story, determining outcomes that shape the direction of the narrative. These rules are briefly outlined here to provide you with a primer before encountering them in more detail as you explore the book further.

Age of Arthur's game rules are derived from an existing and popular set of rules called Fate, which is freely available online. We have adapted them a little to the brutal and heroic setting of Britannia.

Players

Players will create characters, their personae in the story that they will tell together. One of the players takes on the role of the Storyteller. The Storyteller draws out the initial setting, creates the basic story and mediates the rules. The players each have a character created using the rules in this game. Players describe the actions of their characters as they move through the story modifying and developing the initial narrative created by the Storyteller. The Storyteller creates 'non-player characters' that populate Britannia and interact with the player characters.

Characters

Players' characters are made up of four basic elements:

- Aspects – descriptive phrases that say important things about the character.
- Skills – things that the character knows how to do. Skills are rated on a numeric range from 1 to 8. The higher the number the more proficient the character is with the skill.
- Stunts – special abilities that helps the character in certain situations.
- Stress – a measure of resilience when in a conflict.

Tests

Characters will face 'Tests'. A Test is an obstacle or challenge that the characters have to overcome to make progress and take the shared story in the direction that they wish it to go. A desperate sword fight, a negotiation, a seduction, an enchantment, an imploring to the gods, a craven running away are all examples of Tests. Tests are rated on a numeric range from 1 to 8; the higher the number the more difficult the Test. The player will be able to use skills known to their character when making a Test. This skill is modified

by a dice roll that provides a range from -4 to +4. If the result of the skill + dice roll is equal to or higher than the Test difficulty number then it is passed, if it is lower then the character has failed. Sometimes a second skill can be used as a 'support' providing a bonus if it is equal to or higher value than the 'main' skill. Failure can be fun too. It can either take the story in a different direction or rapidly curtail the options for a character.

Aspects

Aspects are used to describe just about anything in the setting, from characters to monsters, places, items and scenes. They can be used in play to improve the result in Tests. Each Aspect brought into play provides a +2 to the character. Frequently bringing an Aspect into play requires the payment of a Fate Point. Each player has a finite store of these. Fate Points can also be acquired by having their characters 'compelled' to act in a way that fits their Aspects and complicates or enlivens their situation. Fate Points flow to and fro between the players and the Storyteller throughout the game. Fate Points can be used in other beneficial ways including allowing the re-roll of rubbish dice rolls and declaring something to be true in the story.

Players may use Manoeuvres. A Manoeuvre is an action in a scene that may create a new Aspect that can then be brought into play to help their allies. Setting the Saxon watchtower alight for example would create an Aspect *Blazing tower of smoke*.

Outcomes

If a Test is failed in a situation that could cause physical or mental damage, the character suffers damage to what is known as a stress score. If a stress score is reduced to zero, then the character is knocked out of the story, either temporarily or permanently, depending on context. To prevent a 'knock out' a player can take a Consequence. A Consequence is a more enduring problem such as a wound, despair or social stigma that the character must carry for the current or more game sessions. Consequences are also Aspects that can be used by opponents during Tests.

If a Test is passed by 3 or greater then this is a critical result. This success is noteworthy and creates 'Spin'. Spin provides a +1 bonus to the character for the next dice roll.

A note on capitalisation

Throughout this book, we have chosen to capitalise all technical game terms to help them stand out.

If you find a term in the book that you don't understand then refer to the glossary found on page 278. There's a lot more game to come, but for now let's find out more about the setting: Britannia.

Britannia and its People

Age of Arthur is set in Dark Ages Britain (or Britannia as it was known to the Romans) towards the end of the fifth century A.D. This is not the land of the medieval vision of Arthur, filled with feudal lords, knights and squires, tempting ladies in towers, jousting and high chivalry. This is the Britain that a historical Arthur might have lived and fought in. Battles are fought between trained warrior elites, soldiers in shield walls armed with spear and sword, remnants of the disciplined army of Rome and some rare British cavalry.

Roman rule, and with it much of Roman law, order and protection has left Britain. The country is no longer united, being divided into many quarrelling kingdoms carving territory round the boundaries of the lands of the pre-Roman tribes and Roman civic districts. Whilst many hold onto the ways of the Romans, the bonds of blood and tribe still run deep. You may fight for your city and for the memory of empire, but you might just as likely fight for your family, your tribe, your kin.

The rulers of these kingdoms may have held positions of authority under Rome, or belong to the local nobility with ties that run deeper even than the many centuries of Roman rule. Some are usurpers and opportunists that hold their lands through the warriors they command and the order they bring at a time of chaos.

These kingdoms are all under threat. The main threat comes from Saxon invaders. These invaders are largely illiterate barbarians with a culture of taking whatever they can seize, be that people or property. They have a belief that might makes right.

There are other threats. The Gaels raid the west coast of Britain, settling in some parts of the country. Christianity and the old Celtic Druidic faith battle for hearts and souls. This conflict sometimes spills over from the spiritual realm into the physical. Magic is a real force in the world, albeit mostly subtle. The druids know the ancient magic of the gods of Britain, Saxon wizards scream their curses and hurl their runes and the prayers of the Christians can have a tangible power.

The most magically powerful beings of all are the Fae, the Fair Folk, who still dwell in parts of Britannia largely untouched and unexplored by mankind. Some Fae are beautiful, whilst others hideous, but none see humanity with any more significance than intriguing play things. The Fae are not, at present, directly involved in the conflicts across the land, but there is always that danger. Due to their power and vainglorious nature it would only take some fool to attempt to involve the Fae in their own cause and change everything. It is also possible that the Fae themselves may see an opportunity that is important to them and then take a more active interest in the affairs of men.

So, these are lands in strife being torn apart by the loss of Rome, fractious fighting between still fermenting tribal rivalries and the incursions of the new invaders. This is a place that needs heroes to unite the people under one banner and set the land back to peace and prosperity. There will have to be a banner that will make people fight not just for their kin, their tribe but for Britain. Perhaps your characters will be those heroes?

Some details about the peoples and languages of Britain are outlined below with more information on Britannia in Chapter 10. A quick primer on the historical period can be found in Chapter 15.

The Britons

Ancient Britain was a Celtic land before the Roman invasion. Now, after hundreds of years, Roman rule has ended. Although Roman culture spread throughout the land, it did not penetrate deeply in all parts of the country, especially in some more rural and isolated areas. These places tend to remain pagan, worshipping the ancient British gods, rather than the Christian one. These people are Celtic rather than Roman in outlook.

As a typical Celtic people, the British believe in living for the moment, seeing no particular merit in self-restraint. The main British virtues are bravery, generosity and loyalty. Personal honour is important, sometimes more than life itself. Honour is driven as much by how one is perceived as how one acts. In particular, it is seen as cowardly not to seek vengeance or restitution for a wrong or insult. Forgiveness may be a Christian virtue, but not a pagan one.

Oaths are also of great importance as far as honour is concerned. Warriors and other retainers are expected to swear an oath of loyalty to one's lord. Oaths may also be sworn to perform a particular task, such as protecting a noble or kingdom, or to seek revenge for some wrong. An honourable man will also respect oaths, both his own and those of others. An oath given before witnesses is binding.

The Romans

The culture on the island is a mixture of Roman and Celtic. Many people in the country still identify themselves as Romans or Roman British. The larger cities in particular are still largely Roman, even though the hard truth is that the grandiose architecture is, in many cases, now crumbling towards ruin.

Unlike the Celtic mindset, the Roman one values self-control and seriousness of purpose. The most important virtues are honesty, bravery and industriousness. Most Romans are now Christian. The Roman and Celtic views are, however, by no means irreconcilable. Both Romans and Celts value loyalty and bravery and view personal honour as being of paramount importance. Both have a deep respect for oaths. There are few people more despised, in the eyes of both God or gods and men, than an oathbreaker.

The Picts

The Picts were the great enemies of the Romans in Britain. Hadrian's Wall was built to defend the realm against them. They are a primitive people, who make use of bronze rather than iron or steel and dress in furs. These days they are a Celtic people, having a similar language to the British.

Honour is important to the Picts, but it is a personal thing, depending less on the perception of others than it does in Britain. Generosity and hospitality only apply to those who deserve it. A warrior, not the community, is the one who knows whether or not he is brave. Even oaths are only binding when given to one who is worthy of them. For this reason, the Picts have an undeserved reputation for being deceitful. The Picts themselves typically do not care, they know their own worth.

The Gaels

The Gaels are from the island of Hibernia to the west of Britain. They are feared raiders and pirates. There are many Gael tribes and kingdoms. Some have formed permanent settlements on British shores. The bulk of Hibernia is now Christian. However, the Gaels found on British shores tend to be fiercely pagan. They have left Hibernia partially because of the widespread adoption of Christianity there.

Like the British, the Gaels are a Celtic people, with similar customs. They were never under Roman rule. As in Britain, honour is all important for the Gaels, and bravery, hospitality and generosity are its cornerstones. However, the Gael language, Goedelic, is different from the British one, Brythonic. The Gael gods, though similar to those of Britain, are distinct and have less power away from their homeland.

The Saxons

The Saxons (and the Angles and Jutes, who share similar cultures and outlook) are a Germanic people in the process of invading and settling in Britain. As far as most of the British are concerned, they are savage and violent barbarian invaders and a threat to civilisation. The truth is more nuanced than this, but the Saxons are happy to take land, valuables and slaves by force. They raid for power and land and will destroy what they cannot take but which may prove of use to their enemies.

The Saxons believe that war and raiding are glorious. A man or woman is entitled to what he or she has earned and only that. Plunder from a raid certainly counts as being earned. As such, the Saxons can be utterly pitiless. Saxons hold anyone too weak to defend what is theirs in contempt. This is not to say that the Saxons are completely lawless. Crimes within Saxon communities can be harshly punished.

The Fae

The Fae are spirits of the wild in physical form. They are ageless. They dwell at the wild edges of civilisation in places mankind fears to tread. All Fae are capable of using the form of magic known as glamour to fool the senses and perhaps create more solid things. They are creatures of caprice and illusion. The emotional outlook of a typical Fae, or even a powerful Fae noble, resembles that of a spoiled child.

Paradoxically, the Fae are also creatures of habit. One of the Fae, with a given role in life, will often follow that role for all eternity unless circumstances change. A Fae cannot break his sworn word, doing so causes physical damage, though he will adhere to the letter rather than the spirit of any oath.

The Fae are associated loosely to the seasons of summer and winter. The summer Fae tend to be creatures of light and beauty and are termed the Seelie. By contrast, the dark and terrifying winter Fae are called the Unseelie. The Seelie and Unseelie instinctively war with each other, and sometimes make use of others in their battles. The Seelie will not usually directly harm humans unless insulted or offended, though be warned, it can take surprisingly little to insult one of the Fae and some are prone to mischief. The Unseelie, by contrast, will often simply hunt down and kill humans who come too close

to their territories. While not always hostile, the Unseelie are instinctively malevolent and will choose to harm rather than help others when both options are available.

As a default, the Fae are too alien to be allowed as player characters, though characters with Fae ancestry are perfectly acceptable and may even, though outwardly human, have access to some Fae magic.

Languages and Names

A large number of different dialects, some mutually comprehensible and some not are spoken in the lands known to Britain. Obviously, different folk, speaking different languages, have different forms of names. The most common languages, and typical names within those languages, can be found below.

Note that for game purposes, we assume that different dialects, even vastly different dialects, of the same broad language are mutually comprehensible. Thus a man from Cornwall and a Pict speaking Brythonic can understand each other. Such a degree of comprehension is perhaps unrealistic, but consistent with the myths and stories of the era.

Brythonic

Brythonic is the native Celtic language of Britain and is still spoken by most people there. The Picts also speak Brythonic, although they have a different dialect. Nearly all player characters in Age of Arthur will know Brythonic, usually as their main language. Traditionally, it had no written form, but under centuries of Roman rule, a way of writing down Brythonic using the Latin alphabet has developed. The Ogham alphabet, developed for Goedelic (see below), is also occasionally used for Brythonic.

The full name of a Brythonic speaker usually consists of their own personal name, followed by "ap" or "ab", meaning "son of", or "ferch" meaning "daughter of", and then their father's name, or mother's name in the case of a Pict. Longer names naming several ancestors, for example Belator ap Vosel ab Owain ap Hywel, are not uncommon in more distinguished families.

Male Names: Andoc, Ban, Belator, Caradoc, Casnar, Cartivel, Dagvalda, Derfel, Dubnus, Eisu, Gwyn, Hywel, Inam, Linus, Lossio, Map, Med, Owain, Regalis, Rhys, Rufus, Segovax, Seniorix, Tamm, Uccu, Vassu, Vosel, Wledig

Female Names: Amba, Angharad, Banna, Belicia, Catia, Cerridwen, Cunsa, Deiana, Diseta, Docca, Eisia, Elen, Gleva, Locina, Lucilia, Magunna, Minura, Narina, Oconeia, Rhian, Rosula, Sennia, Sian, Totia, Vatta, Velua, Vinda

Pronunciation

Brythonic is pronounced similarly to modern Welsh. The letter "c" is always hard, like a "k". The double letter "dd" is pronounced like "th" in "then" in English. A single letter

"f" is pronounced as a "v" in English, though the double letter "ff" is pronounced as "f". The letter "w" is a vowel as well as a consonant. When unaccompanied by other vowels, it is pronounced as an "oo". The letter "y" is usually pronounced as an "i", though when accompanied by a "w", it is pronounced more like a "u". The letter combination "oe" is pronounced "ore".

Goedelic

Goedelic is the language of the Gaels. It is closely related to Brythonic, but is its own tongue. The two languages are not mutually understandable apart from a few words. Goedelic has its own alphabet, Ogham, but this alphabet is only used by the druids. Most of those who have Goedelic as their primary language are illiterate.

As with Brythonic names, a full Goedelic name consists of the man or woman's personal name, followed by "mac" meaning "son of", or "nic", meaning "daughter of", before the father's name, or occasionally the mother's name when she is more distinguished.

In most of the following names we have, to some extent, anglicised the spelling for ease of pronunciation.

Male Names: Anrothan, Arannan, Brion, Cellach, Conall, Cormac, Diarmot, Fergus, Fionn, Gann, Killian, Lasair, Morand, Niall, Oscar, Ronan, Ruarc, Seamus, Senach, Tuama

Female Names: Ailleán, Aiofe, Arva, Cliona, Daireann, Dierdre, Eadan, Etain, Evla, Fanach, Irnan, Loibhan, Maeve, Maren, Nessa, Niamh, Odras, Scena, Siobhan, Una

Pronunciation

As a guideline, Goedelic is pronounced similarly to modern Gaelic. This means that consonants are pronounced differently depending on the surrounding vowels and the letter "h" after a consonant completely changes its sound.

Some of the most marked differences from English pronunciation are that the letter "s" is pronounced "sh" when an "i" or "e" is either side of it in a word. The letter "t" is pronounced as "ch" in this situation. The combinations "bh" and "mh" are pronounced as either a "w" or a "v" depending on the surrounding vowels (a "v" in the case of an "i" or "e" either side, and a "w" otherwise), the combination "dh" is similar to "ch", but using a hard "g" instead of a "c", the combination "fh" is silent, "ph" is pronounced as "f", and "sh" and "th" are pronounced simply as "h" is in English.

But as mentioned above, for many Goedelic names, we have Anglicised the spelling.

Latin

Latin was the language of Rome and became the common language of the civilised world. It is also both the language of scholarship and the language of the Christian church. Most of the literate and educated population are competent in Latin.

Traditional Roman names consisted of a personal name, used only by family members and close friends, followed by a family name, which was the name in common use, followed by a clan name. Only men had a personal name. Some prominent Romans had one or more honorifics following the clan name.

This system has, however, fallen into disuse. Those in Britain favouring Roman naming conventions now typically have just two names, a personal name and a family name, though honorifics are still sometimes used. A male name can usually be changed to a female one, and vice versa, by changing the "us" ending to an "a" ending. For family names, a masculine "us" ending is also sometimes changed to an "a" ending for women, though this is not always the case. Note, however, that an "a" ending in a family name, is not always feminine. Many of the personal names used in Britain are Latinised forms of Celtic names.

Male Personal Names: Artorios, Beliatius, Catus, Claudius, Commios, Cunitus, Decius, Drusus, Fulvius, Gaius, Julius, Lucianus, Livius, Marcus, Numinus, Petronius, Quintus, Suetius, Sullio, Titus

Female Personal Names: Aelia, Aurelia, Camilla, Drusilla, Domitia, Flavia, Geminia, Gratia, Hostilia, Julia, Junia, Marcia, Numicia, Octavia, Pontia, Rutilia, Salvia, Tullia, Vispania

Family Names: Agricola, Albinus, Aquila, Belicianus, Briginus, Dentatus, Galeo, Helva, Iviacus, Lupus, Merula, Ocella, Pavo, Scaeva, Seneca, Strabo, Varro, Vetenus, Vodinius

honorifics: Britannicus (victor in Britain), Felix (the lucky), Magnus (the great), Maximus (the very great), Pius (the dutiful), Sapens (the prudent)

Pronunciation

The letter "c" is always hard, like a "k". The letter "g" is also always hard. The letter "i" is a consonant as well as a vowel and when before a vowel is pronounced like a "y". The letter "v" is pronounced like a "w". The diphthong "ae" is pronounced "ai", "au" is pronounced "ow" and "ei" is pronounced "ay".

Saxon

Saxon is a Germanic language, unsurprisingly spoken by the Saxons. The Angle and Jute languages are also dialects of Saxon and are mutually comprehensible. Nearly all native speakers of Anglo-Saxon dialects are illiterate, but there is an alphabet in the form of the Futhark Runes, as well as runes for various words. These runes are mainly used when writing down names and for the purposes of magic, especially divination. Indeed, the majority of literate Saxons are workers of magic.

A Saxon only has a single given name. To distinguish between two people with the same name, one adds the person's occupation or home village, or the husband's name for a married woman.

Male Names: Aelle, Aldhelm, Alfred, Alric, Berthun, Caedmon, Ceolwulf, Egbert, Ethelbert, Ethelred, Hengist, Horsa, Imric, Octa, Osric, Oswald, Oswyn, Penda, Redwarld, Sigbert, Thrydwulf, Wilfred

Female Names: Achae, Aedilhild, Aelfwyn, Anna, Bregusuid, Coenburg, Cynwise, Eaba, Eanfled, Edith, Hilda, Hildegard, Hereswyth, Inga, Matilda, Nothgyth, Osthryth, Rymenhild, Saegyth, Tatae, Wulfwyn

Pronunciation

Saxon is pronounced somewhat similarly to modern German in that every letter tends to be enunciated and consonants are hard. Even separate vowels are usually pronounced separately rather than forming a diphthong, so for example the combination "ea" is pronounced "ee-ay", and the letters are separated in "oe". However, the combination "ae" forms a single sound, "ai", as in Latin. The combination "ch" is pronounced more like "kh" except at the beginning of a word. The letter "w" is pronounced as an English "v".

Inspirational Reading

Novels

There are a lot of novels out there retelling versions of the Arthurian myth and as many different takes on the subject as there are authors. We do not give anything like a complete list here, but the following are close to the intended mood of Age of Arthur, most especially the Bernard Cornwell trilogy.

The Winter King, Enemy of God, Excalibur (B. Cornwell)

The Little Emperors (A. Duggan)

The Crystal Cave, The Hollow Hills, The Last Enchantment, The Wicked Day (M. Stewart)

The Lantern Bearers, Swords at Sunset (R. Sutcliffe)

Myth and History

The list below includes a few of the more factual sources we took inspiration from in putting this book together. It is neither complete nor particularly scholarly, but is a starting point for further reading.

The Ancient Celts (B. Cunliffe)

A Companion to Arthurian and Celtic Myths and Legend (M. Dixon-Kennedy)

David Nash Ford's Early British Kingdom's Website (EBK):

<http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/>

On the Ruin of Britain (Gildas)

Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West 450-900 (G. Halsall)

Hadrian's Wall and the End of Empire: The Roman Frontier in the 4th and 5th Centuries (R. Collins)

Roman Britain (P. Salway)

An Age of Tyrants: Britain and the Britons AD 400-600 (C.A. Snyder)

Other Roleplaying Games

Several games had a significant influence on Age of Arthur. These include Spirit of the Century (Evil Hat Productions) and Diaspora (VSCA) which provided the basis for the Fate rules system used in these rules. Other games, such as GURPS Camelot (Steve Jackson Games) and Pendragon (Nocturnal Media), helped set the tone and feel of this game.

An extra special mention goes to Diaspora. We loved playing the game and enjoyed their take on the Fate roleplaying system. In fact we loved it so much we used the freely available Diaspora System Reference Document as the basis for the Age of Arthur game rules. They've been heavily revised, but some readers may see some resonance from that version of Fate in this book.

Age of Arthur and Fate Core

Fate Core is the latest, and genre-free, iteration of the Fate engine from its original publishers, Evil Hat. Age of Arthur is a self-contained game based on Fate 3.0 and the Diaspora Fate RPG.. However, this game is highly compatible with Fate Core whilst bringing some innovations of our own to the table.

Age of Arthur introduces new mechanics into Fate for contests, mass combat, and magic. Age of Arthur and Fate Core differ slightly in their handling of Fate Points, and in how stress and consequences work. The main difference is that in Age of Arthur, you must declare an Aspect before any dice are rolled to get a bonus. There are further novelties in the use of Storyteller Fate Points for NPCs, and weapon damage and armour protection values.

If the above means nothing to you at this stage, there is no need to worry! You don't need to be familiar with Fate Core, or any other Fate game, to enjoy Age of Arthur.



Chapter 2 - Creating Characters

Your character is your voice in the game, the person whose story you will tell when playing Age of Arthur. This chapter provides you with guidance on how to create your character, to find out what they will bring to the story and the sort of voice you will have during play. The information about a character can be recorded either on a special character sheet, as included at the back of this book, or simply written down on a sheet of paper.

A character can be created alone using these rules but significantly benefits from being generated together with the other players in the first game session. The 'life tales', described below, pre-suppose connections and interactions between the players' emerging characters as they are described. This process creates an introductory narrative, mutual bonds, knowledge of each other's past, secrets, aspirations, losses and gains. It helps create a shared understanding before the game's collective story starts to unfold.

By this stage you may already have selected a Storyteller from your group to run the game. It can be a good idea for the Storyteller to also create a player character. This provides a non-player character known by the group, and creates the opportunity for the Storyteller to become a player if one of the players has a story in mind, and an urge to run the game to tell that story.

A Band of Heroes

Age of Arthur provides a very flexible character generation method. Through stories and choices of Skills, Stunts and Aspects, a player can create anyone he likes. As a group you may wish to tell particular stories that favour the abilities of certain player character backgrounds. The Storyteller may have a set of scenarios that will draw on particular Skills.

In our play and sample scenarios we have made some broad assumptions on the sort of characters that will fit the default style of games. The default player character group is a circle of advisers and special agents of one of the minor kings, princes and warlords, including Arthur himself. Such bands are movers and shakers, capable of involvement in politics and leading armies, but maintaining a degree of independence, with the possibility of pursuing smaller more personal quests. Your group will have many fine

warriors, perhaps a bard, druid or priest and maybe a prince or princess too. The example characters in the Allies and Adversaries chapter provide further inspiration.

You can develop your characters together with an eye on the tales that you wish to tell. Age of Arthur will give you complete creative control over who you will play. Your stories and characters could be quite different than what we have imagined. That's fine, it's your game, play it how you want to.

Some other possibilities include:

- A group of villagers, abandoned by their lord, united by the desire to protect their home from the Saxon invaders.
- A band of druids, bards and associates, who wish to recover the lost magical Treasures of Britain.
- The leader of a mercenary warband, and his officers and associates.
- The small group of mortal agents of one of the Fae courts.

The Stuff of Heroes

Your character is described using four different game elements: Aspects, Skills, Stunts and Stress Scores. These are expanded on below.

Aspects

Aspects tell you important things about the character's identity and values

Aspects are short, evocative, statements that describe the character in ways that can be used in the game, both in favour and against the character, as well as being used as signposts for the Storyteller and players to suggest interesting courses of action.

The selection of a character's initial Aspects is an essential part of character generation. Aspects derive from the character's story background created through a number of 'tales'. These are the introductory chapters of the character's life.

Aspects are also the catalysts for the spending and earning Fate Points. You will have a small number of Fate Points, typically represented by physical tokens of some sort. Fate Points can help your character succeed and influence the outcome of Tests.

Aspects need to be worded in such a way that you can 'invoke them'. This is done by declaring an Aspect is relevant when your character is under pressure and being 'Tested'. If the invocation is approved by the Storyteller then the Aspect grants a bonus to the dice roll that determines if the character succeeds at the Test. This will cost you one of your Fate Points. Perhaps more importantly, Aspects also need to be worded in such a way as to invite 'compels' from the Storyteller and other players. A compel is where the Aspect is typically used to make things more difficult for the character. If the player accepts the compel then they gain one or more Fate Points to spend later. A well-worded Aspect is

thus best phrased as a double edged sword, providing advantage and complications in equal measure.

Example: A headstrong confidence in battle.

It's great to have this Aspect as a bonus in the terror of mortal combat, but may this confidence be misplaced?

Not all Aspects can work that way. It may emerge in play that some Aspects simply are not being used, either invoked by the player or compelled by others. You aren't stuck with a rubbish Aspect. The character experience process allows for Aspect trading to remove Aspects that simply aren't being used. The Storyteller could even allow you to do this for free after the first session or so to be sure that you are starting with useful Aspects.

Aspects might reveal something about the character that he or she may not even be aware of. An Aspect could also refer to an important relationship, such as to a character's lord, a family member, or a lover.

An Aspect might be a physical object, such as an heirloom weapon, or a powerful horse. In making that choice, the player is telling the Storyteller that this object is part of the character's identity. It won't be taken away, but it should also confer obligations and responsibilities, so that it too is an active part of the game mechanically.

Skills

Skills tell you what your character can do

Skills are the basic abilities of the character and are used continuously throughout the game. They are chosen from a list provided later in this section and used to add to the basic dice roll during any Test in which the skill is relevant.

Stunts

Stunts tell you how your character can break the rules to their advantage in play

Stunts are new rules that give you an advantage in certain Tests. Only player characters and selected significant Non Player characters have Stunts. They mark out the heroes and the protagonists who will shape the future of the world by their deeds.

Stress Scores

Stress Scores monitor how much trouble your character is in

Stress scores are indications of how stressed the character is physically, mentally and socially. They are reduced during play when a character loses Tests. If the character does very badly then the appropriate Stress score is reduced to zero and the character is knocked out of the game, either permanently, or temporarily depending on the situation.

Making Up Your Character

There are six steps to making a new character.

1. Let the story begin - Tales, Aspects and Oath-making
2. Select Skills
3. Select Stunts
4. Calculate Stress Scores
5. Starting Fate Points
6. Starting Resources

The rest of this chapter will take you through each step.

Let the story begin - Tales, Aspects and Oath-making

As befits heroes, who are important characters that will shape the future of Britain, your character will start play already with a story to tell. This story is split into five 'tales'.

For each of the tales outlined below, players should follow this procedure:

- Write a short paragraph or a series of bullet points describing the events of this tale (think in terms of allocating no more than five minutes for this each time and less is fine). You may wish simply to proclaim the events of the tale just as the bards do without writing them down.
- In turn, read them out to each other. This is important, as it helps others learn about your character at the same time that you do.
- Select one Aspect, derived from the written paragraph or from your telling of the tale. They can literally be phrases pulled straight from the paragraph or new phrases that are drawn from the tale and illustrate something about the character. This can be done individually, or as a consultative process with the group round the table. Once selected, everyone should read out their derived Aspect. You'll find that there is plenty of fiddling with Aspects at this point, getting them just

right. Have fun with it and don't get too stuck on procedure. Your core objective is to come up with highly usable Aspects, so listening to the table and how they respond to your ideas can often yield exciting results. This will help shape what you put on your character sheet.

- Repeat for each of the tales, until each character has a number of Aspects equal to the number of tales.

Rule

If you want your character to have magical powers then it must be featured in one of your tales and be assigned a relevant Aspect. An appropriate stunt must also be picked out later in the process.

Going through these tales for four characters might take about 45–60 minutes, including reading aloud the gradual development of the characters after each tale.

On completing the five tales add one more Aspect to the character. It can be anything that you feel adds to the character that the tales have not yet allowed you to express.

Tale one: Beginnings

This tale tells us something about where the character has come from. This might be about their tribe, something about the way the gods have moulded them, the inherent personality of the character, their essence, those characteristics that define and mark them.

- Are you a Briton?
- A Saxon slave?
- Gael?
- Do you worship the old gods of the land or the new Christ?
- Who are your parents?
- How have they shaped your start in life?
- Are the ways of Rome still revered in your household?
- Are you quick tempered?
- Cold and cynical?

- Guileless and trusting?
- Do you read?
- Are you noted in the hunt?
- Sing the old songs?
- Have you experienced the battles to stem the tide of the encroaching Saxons?
- How has that shaped you?

Tale two: What did you do at...

The Storyteller will choose a starting significant event in the timeline (see page 153) which all the player characters were present at. For example this could be one of the big battles, character stories or, possibly, something outside of the timeline that the Storyteller has created to be prominent in the game. Either way, it is a point of connection between the player characters, something that draws them together and highlights something about their own stories. The Aspect derived from this tale might include features of the event and the character's actions. It might feature a relationship or a blessing from the gods.

Tale three: What made you the hero that you are?

This tale describes how the character has become the noted person they are now. Consider what sort of path you have taken in life and how has that made a name for you?

- As a druid, what rites did you undergo?
- Are you a brave warrior that can stand in the shield wall? How are you known to your companions?
- Are you a warband leader? What made you their leader?
- As a bard, which songs are you noted for and how do you convey them to your enraptured listeners?
- What vision brought you to the Church?
- How did you join the sisterhood of witches? What mysteries have you learned and what old magics can you wield?
- Merchant and master of commerce? In what do you trade and what trade routes do you ply?

Tale four: Significant events

Write a brief description of an event that causes a significant change to the character, something that the character would talk about later, maybe to his friends around the hearth, maybe only to his lover, or maybe to himself while in his sleep, racked with the cold sweats and the voices and the screaming. In this tale, the moment of crisis must reference one or more of the other player characters. As long as they agree, you may want to bring them in as an observer, a participant, or even as the focus of the event. This is an opportunity to help define another character as well as your own. Try to bind all the characters together in some way.

- How do their stories intertwine?
- How are their fates already linked?
- How has this tale shaped who the character is as they enter the game?
- How did they become associated with the other player characters?

Tale five: Oath making

This is an optional additional tale, should the character wish to be bound by an oath when coming into the game. Oaths are important for people in the Age of Arthur setting. An oath is something someone swears to do, or not to do, in the name of his gods or for something he holds very dear; preferably something where he has a related Aspect. An oath must be sworn in front of at least one adult witness.

The oath taken could either suggest a personal mission, or represent ties of duty and loyalty to the group he belongs to.

Examples of Oaths

I will serve and protect my lord Edgar with my life.
To drive the Saxon Hauk and his dogs from my home.
To rescue my true love from the clutches of the Fae.
Never to trespass again on Lord Edgar's land.

The oath is an Aspect. If an oath is made during play (not during character generation) then the character immediately gains a Fate Point. The oath Aspect can be used and compelled in the same way as any other Aspect (see page 78 for more on how to use Aspects).

Oaths are taken very seriously. Trivial or flippant oaths may be disallowed by the table or deemed to have no mechanical benefit. Similarly, there is no benefit to swearing oaths with no real consequences. An oath never to trespass again on Lord Edgar's land is irrelevant if the one who makes it has no reason to return to Lord Edgar's land. That said, even an oath of this nature might have unforeseen results.

Select Skills

Players select 15 starting skills from the list below. Skills are the things that the character is proficient at and forms the basis of how they will interact with the story and their success in the many Tests they will face.

Selected Skills should be logically consistent with the character's background material as elaborated in the Aspect tales but there are no hard and fast rules for selection. Skills are selected so that they are appropriate for the characters about whom we've now learned quite a lot (with even more existing in the players' imaginations).

There are many Skills from which you can choose, most of which represent a specific area of learned knowledge. In the Skill chapter each skill is expanded upon with a brief overview of how the skill can be used in a game session. The overview is a guide, the precise range of a given Skill's effect should be determined by the Storyteller in consultation with the table.

Rule

If a character attempts to use a skill he does not have, it is treated as being at an effective skill level of 0.

The skills are grouped into four main categories: Mental, Physical, Social and Magical. A character that has a number of skills from each of the first three categories is more 'balanced' and rounded, with ability in lots of different situations. There are no rules requiring you to have a certain number of skills in certain categories, but take a look at the Mental/Physical/Social mix once your skill selection is done, it may reveal something further about your character.

Two skills are actually labels for a group of separate skills: Lore and Profession. When selecting one of these skills, you also need to select a 'Type'. You can select these skills multiple times with different Types should you so wish. See the descriptions for these skills in Chapter 3. You should pick one or more in your initial selection.

There is one skill that you must select: Wealth. The Wealth skill defines how wealthy you are rated from slave through to a mighty king. The level that you set will be determined by your character's story and agreed with the Storyteller.

Another skill to explicitly mention here is Languages. Post-Roman Britannia is largely a bilingual society. A typical British player character will know both Latin and Brythonic, though by default they are literate in neither. Player characters from other backgrounds will know the language of their background, such as Goedelic or Saxon, and one of these two languages without requiring any levels in this skill. Further languages, or literacy in any of these tongues, requires levels in the Languages skill.

As well as the Mental, Physical and Social skills, a character might have a magical skill. These skills are rare. Having one must be justified by a character's background story.

Rule

In order to have a magical skill a character must have both a relevant Aspect and a Stunt (see below) granting access to that skill. The Rune Magic skill also requires the character to know the Futhark Runes as one of his languages taken using the Languages skill.

Skill List

Mental Skills	Physical Skills	Social Skills	Magical Skills
Awareness	Agility	Charm	Divination
Gaming	Brawling	Contacts	Druidic Magic
Investigation	Melee Combat	Deception	Faith
Healing	Missile Combat	Empathy	Glamour
Lore [Type]	Riding	Intimidation	Plant and Root
Profession [Type]	Stealth	Languages	Rune Magic
Strategy and Tactics	Strength	Leadership	Shapechanging
Survival		Performance	
Willpower		Wealth	

Once you have selected your skills you need to assign a numeric skill level to each of them. The skill level tells you how proficient the character is with the skill. A skill level of '1' represents a basic grounding in the skill. A skill level of '8' means the character has mastered all possible elements of the skill and is one of the greatest in all the kingdoms of men.

Characters start with the following:

- One skill at Level 5
- Two skills at Level 4
- Three skills at Level 3
- Four skills at Level 2
- Five skills at Level 1

It is typically easier to start by deciding on your character's most proficient skill at level 5, and then work down the lower levels. During play you will get opportunities to change these levels and add new skills.

Select Stunts

Stunts are special rules that give the characters an edge during Tests. Characters start with 5 Stunts. An extensive list of examples can be found in chapter 3. All of the Stunts in this book are of one of the following seven types.

Specialism

Specialism grants a +1 bonus to a particular use of a skill. If the table agrees through consensus that the specialism is particularly narrow, the bonus is increased to +2, possibly for an additional cost of a Fate point in a scene where it is used. Such a limitation is especially relevant for combat skills. Each skill description in Chapter 3 provides some suggested specialisms. You may select multiple specialisms on one skill, though only one can apply at a time. Each specialism is one Stunt.

New Skill Use

This Stunt lets a skill do something it could not do before. This could be a mundane but clever reworking of a particular skill to operate in new situations. Some instances of this Stunt are magical in nature. For instance, a character could have a Stunt that allows him or her to run for a short time across water or an awareness ability that allows them to see into the Otherworld. A character must have an appropriate Aspect to have access to a magical version of this stunt.

If, by table consensus, the skill use seems particularly powerful or unusual, this Stunt should cost a Fate Point each time it is used.

New Combat Application

When a character has this Stunt, he or she can use a skill to either attack or defend in battle, when it could not be used in this way before. For instance, with this Stunt a character could use the Intimidate skill to defend himself or herself in personal combat, or have a fiery gaze that lets him or her use the Awareness skill to make physical attacks. As a variation, this Stunt could also allow a successful defence in combat to cause damage equal to the degree of success, at the cost of a Fate point for each use.

Equipment is irrelevant to attacks and defences made using this Stunt. Attacks do damage equal to the Degree of Success regardless of weapon used or armour worn. This can of course be an advantage or a disadvantage, depending on the situation.

Extra Capacity

The extra capacity Stunt doubles the benefit associated to a skill, such as the amount of extra stress granted to a stress score, or the bonus to a Test.

Ignore Restriction or Difficulty

This Stunt lets you ignore a particular restriction that will normally prevent a skill from being used, or ignore complicating factors that will increase the difficulty of a particular type of Skill Test. For example, this Stunt could let a character attempt to use the Stealth skill without any cover.

If ignoring the restriction seems especially potent to the table, this stunt will cost a Fate Point each time it is used.

Magical Calling

Magic is rare in the Age of Arthur, though player characters are more likely to have access to magical skills than most. This stunt lets someone who also has a relevant Aspect learn a magical skill.

Extra Refresh

This Stunt does nothing except grant the character a +1 bonus to the initial number of Fate Points and the number gained when Fate Points are refreshed. It can be taken more than once to gain additional Fate Points at the start and each refresh.

As players become more familiar with the character generation process they may wish to select their Stunts before their Skills, or at the same time. The process can be undertaken iteratively, allowing finer control of elements and can be revisited a few times before the player is happy with the result.

Calculate Stress Scores

Finally, stress scores are calculated. Stress scores represent how durable the character is when embroiled in different sorts of Tests. The higher the score, the more 'damage' the character can take before they start to face more lasting consequences.

Stress scores can be reduced in each turn of a Contest when a character loses an opposed Test. If the score is reduced to zero then the character has lost the Contest and is out of the game for a moment, or has to choose a Consequence and stay in the action. This is covered in more detail in the chapter on Tests (page 83). Stress scores can also be affected outside of Contests by losing Endurance Tests (page 95).

There are two stress scores. Both start at three, though this number is increased by certain skills and Stunts, as noted below.

Health

The Health Stress Score measures how much physical punishment the character can sustain before they face physical Consequences; Minor cuts and bruises, winded or fatigued, slightly under the weather.

The Strength skill increases the Health score. For every two Strength skill levels (round up) add one to Health. Some Stunts increase this further.

Strength	Health
0	3
1 to 2	4
3 to 4	5
5 to 6	6
7 to 8	7

Composure

The Composure Stress Score records mental and social stress such as fear, despair, and losing social standing or confidence. The mind is every bit as fragile as the body and the brutality and horrors in the Age of Arthur are just as challenging as anything that tests the body.

The Willpower skill increases the Composure score. For every two Willpower skill levels (round up) add one to Composure. Some Stunts increase this further.

Willpower	Composure
0	3
1 to 2	4
3 to 4	5
5 to 6	6
7 to 8	7

Starting Fate Points

A new character will have a Refresh rate of five, unless this number is increased by Stunts. The initial number of Fate Points is equal to the Refresh Rate.

Starting Resources

The character has the minimum amount of equipment from chapter 4 that he needs for his current occupation. For example, a soldier will have a weapon of some kind (most likely a gladius or spear). A healer will have a healing kit. These will be of basic quality, not too expensive and certainly nothing with a cost of more than 2.

You can also pick a number of other items equal to his Wealth skill. These items must have a cost equal to or lower than his Wealth skill. Buying further items requires a Wealth skill test, as described in chapter 4.

Worked Example

Jason is sitting down with a few friends to create a character for Age of Arthur. He has a rough idea in his head of a minor nobleman from Ebrauc (a small kingdom corresponding to modern Yorkshire, the place the Storyteller wants to set the game) who has found his way to dabbling in some form of magic. He decides upon the name Drustan ap Bren.

Tales and Aspects

Tale one: Beginnings

Drustan is the only child of Bren ap Mor, the younger brother of King Einion ap Mor of Ebrauc and chief of Ebrauc's war leaders. Although the son of a warrior, Drustan was taught how to speak, read and write Latin as well as how to fight. Indeed, this early taste of education was more influential on him than his war training, giving him a thirst for more knowledge.

Aspect: Nephew of the King of Ebrauc.

Tale two: What did you do at...

The Storyteller decides that the key event that links the characters together is the battle of Verulamium. In this battle High King Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon defeats the Saxons in an exceptionally bloody battle, but himself dies, along with his brother Uther, leaving no clear successor as high king. Britain is fragmented into feuding kingdoms with no high king to lead them.

Jason decides that Bren ap Mor led the forces sent by the kingdom of Ebrauc to that battle. He took his son Drustan with him as part of his warband and general assistant. However, Bren and most of Ebrauc's forces were killed in battle and Drustan barely escaped with his life.

Aspect: War is a dark hell

Tale three: What made you the hero that you are?

Following the battle, Drustan found himself disgusted with the slaughter that warrior culture brings. He decided not to return to Ebrauc to take up his inheritance. Drustan's thirst for knowledge was reawakened when, during the battle, he saw the knowledge and power of druid Myrddin first hand and the old magic that he wielded. Drustan pestered Myrddin to take him on as apprentice. The great druid, seeing some magical potential in Drustan, reluctantly agreed.

Aspect: Myrddin's apprentice

Tale four: Significant events

Drustan's magical talents blossomed. He travelled around the country with Myrddin but, after a time, the apprentice grew impatient with his master, feeling he could learn more on his own and that he was being held back from finding things out. Drustan suspects that Myrddin actually planned for him to feel this way and, when the time was right, for him to act on his own. So, the young druid struck out for Londinium, seeking a book of prophecy on the future of Britain that Myrddin had mentioned.

The trip was a disaster. Londinium was mostly in ruins and the few remaining families seemed locked in never-ending feuds. Worse, the city is frequented by Saxon treasure hunters. It was only thanks to a new friend, Brutus (another player character), who Drustan met in the city, that he made it out alive.

Aspect: Thirst for knowledge.

Tale five: Oath making

After this adventure Drustan realised it was time to return to Ebrauc and perform his duty to the kingdom, albeit as a druid rather than a warrior. He returns home to take up his inheritance and renew his oath to the king.

Oath: To work for the good of Ebrauc and King Einion.

This leaves one extra Aspect to select. Jason wants to deepen his connection with the magic of Britain and open his character to both the light and the darkness that this may bring.

Aspect: Enmeshed in the magic of Britain

Select Skills

Jason decides that Drustan's main skill, at level 5, is Druidic Magic. After all, he was the apprentice of Myrddin himself. He also needs a sufficient language skill to have Latin literacy and Ogham, as well as his native languages of Brythonic and Latin. He'll need a Languages skill of at least 2. His early military training by Brin gives him a Melee Combat skill of 3.

Overall, the initial skills and levels are:

- Level 5: Druidic Magic
- Level 4: Investigation, Wealth
- Level 3: Healing, Melee Combat, Willpower
- Level 2: Contacts, Languages, Lore [British gods], Lore [Fae]
- Level 1: Awareness, Charm, Riding, Strategy and Tactics, Survival

Select Stunts

In order to learn Druidic Magic, Jason takes the Druidic Training stunt, which is required for him to learn Druidic magic. Looking over the list of Stunts in chapter 3, Jason opts for the Curse Barrier and Ward Stunts. A specialism in Investigation involving libraries seems appropriate.

Finally, Jason decides he might have use for more Fate Points. He knows that he will need them for some of the things he can do with his Druidic Magic. So, his final Stunt is Extra Refresh.

Calculate Stress Scores

Jason did not select Strength as one of his initial skills and it defaults to 0. So, Drustan's Health is the base score of 3. Drustan's Willpower of 3 raises his Composure score above the base, to 5.

Starting Fate Points

Because of the Extra Refresh Stunt, Drustan has a Refresh Rate 6 rather than 5, and begins play with 6 Fate Points.

Starting Resources

Drustan, as a druid, has what resources he needs to practice his profession, if they have a cost of 2 or less. This consists of a Healing Kit and a Dagger.

With his Wealth score of 4, Drustan can have up to 4 belongings with a value of 4 or lower. He picks out a spatha, a small selection of history books, a riding horse, and some clothes appropriate for court.

Name: Drustan ap Bren

Aspects: Nephew of the King of Ebrauc
War is a dark hell
Myrddin's apprentice
Thirst for knowledge
Enmeshed in the magic of Britain

Oaths: To work for the good of Ebrauc and its king

Skills:

Level 5 Druidic Magic
Level 4 Investigation, Wealth
Level 3 Healing, Melee Combat, Willpower
Level 2 Contacts, Languages, Lore [British Gods, Fae]
Level 1 Awareness, Charm, Riding, Strategy and Tactics, Survival
Stunts: Druidic Training (can learn Druidic Magic)
Investigation Specialism (+1 in Libraries)
Ward (Fate Point to use Druidic magic as physical defence)
Curse Barrier (Fate point to use Druidic magic as barrier, cursing those who cross)
Extra Refresh (+1 Refresh Rate)

Health: 3

Composure: 5

Refresh Rate: 6

Languages: Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy, Ogham

Equipment: Spatha (Damage 3)
Riding horse
Healing Kit
Small collection of history books
Dagger (Damage 1, can throw)
Expensive clothes (suitable for court)



Chapter 3 - Skills and Stunts

About Skills

Skills are the abilities that characters use to interact with the game world. They are used in Tests to see how a character fares during moments of tension, when the story could go one of many ways. Characters will start with a specific number of skills, selected from the list in this chapter. When a skill is known by a character it is rated numerically between 1 and 8, indicating how knowledgeable, experienced or just plain gifted the character is with the skill. The higher the number the more proficient the character is when using the skill in the game. Higher skills enable the character to overcome more difficult Tests and face more proficient opponents.

Skills also have suggested 'Specialisms'. A specialism signifies a honing of the broader skill into a finer application, where the character has learned special techniques and understanding to better succeed in particular circumstances. These specialisms are selected as Stunts (see page 29) either during character creation or through experience. They confer an additional +1 bonus when the skill is used in such a way that the specialism is brought into play.

The skill descriptions in this chapter refer to game rules which you will find later in the book. These rules will be clear once you have read chapters such as 'Playing Age of Arthur' and 'Mortal Combat'. Revisit this chapter often to see how skills are used throughout the game.

Making up your own Skills

Most additions to the skill list can be accommodated through the Specialism Stunt, so consider this first before creating a whole new skill for the game. Examples of Specialisms, which can be taken using the Specialism Stunt, are listed for each skill below. Still, if there is a skill that you would like to add to the list, feel free to create it or modify the ones suggested here.

The Skill List

Skills are split into four categories: Mental, Physical, Social and Magical. This is largely for convenience and has no impact on the game. For a character to be capable in a wide range of Tests they will have skills drawn from each of the first three categories. On the other hand, it may be more fun to follow your character concept and draw out the key skills that you think their Tales support.

Mental Skills

Awareness

Specialisms: Keep watch, Listen intently, Read lips, Scan surroundings, Sense danger, Detect poisons

Awareness Skill Tests are often requested by the Storyteller, rather than initiated by the player, to see if a character notices something. Awareness also determines the order of action in combat. The combatant with the highest Awareness skill gets to act first.

Gaming

Specialisms: High Stakes Gambling, Latrunculi, Popular dice games

The character is proficient in social games and games of chance. A gamer always seems to come out of the games ahead or with an advantage. A gamer is prepared, indeed confident, to take risks and this skill can be used as a support skill to help with dicey manoeuvres that need split second timing, difficult negotiations and social schemes that could easily lead to dangerous consequences. It is not usable as a support for most combat Tests. The gamer relishes the challenge and often knows when is the right time to make their play.

Gamers rock.

Healing

Specialisms: Battle wounds, Child birth, Disease, Poisons, Surgery, Troubled soul

The Healing skill encompasses all sorts of healing with specialisms providing a skill focus including first aid, treatment of poisons and diseases, surgery and the calming of a troubled mind. The last of these can include recovering from mental afflictions inflicted by magic.

A successful Healing Skill Test removes Stress and improves the healing time for Consequences (see page 92). A Healing Test can also be made to reduce the recovery time needed against a poison or disease, or to place a manoeuvre assisting a Strength-based Test to resist being afflicted by disease or poison. Rules for disease and poisons can be found on page 96.

Investigation

Specialisms: Nefarious activity, Searching for traps, Secret passageways, Roman records

The Investigation skill is used to search an area for clues, secret doors, traps and so on. The main difference between the Awareness and Investigation skill is that the Investigation skill is used for a systematic search over a relatively protracted time, whereas Awareness is about picking up something using the basic five senses. Certainly a character might find things with Investigation where he has no chance with Awareness, but of course Investigation takes time.

Lore [Type]

Lore is a catch all skill representing important areas of knowledge. When this skill is taken, a particular type of lore must be specified. Examples include: History, the Fae, the Old Gods, The New Christ, Romans, Healing Herbs, Folklore. Lore skills are also very useful as supporting skills (see page 85) in a Test, providing knowledge and understanding to help overcome difficulties.

Profession [Type]

When this skill is taken, a particular profession must be specified. Examples for just the first three letters of the alphabet include artist, blacksmith, carpenter and cook. A specialism can be selected within the profession type.

Essentially, any skill a character might have that is not covered by the other skills in this section can be taken as a profession skill. So, if Profession [Engineer] is selected a specialism Stunt can also be selected with possible examples being: Bridges, Dwellings, Hillforts, Roman civil engineering, Shipbuilding

This skill can be taken multiple times to provide knowledge for a range of professions.

Strategy and Tactics

Specialisms: Ambush, Assault the walls!, Defend the line, Open battle, Siege

The Strategy and Tactics skill measures a character's experience and understanding of battles, whether large or small. A Test can be made to place an Aspect on an opponent or an environment during a battle.

Large battles are resolved by contests involving the Strategy and Tactics skills of the two commanders, modified by the forces under their command and perhaps the actions of the player characters. This skill is heavily used in the 'Battle' chapter (page 118).

Survival

Specialisms: Cities, Follow wild trails, Finding your way, Foraging, Hunting, Safe camp-sites, Sailing

The Survival skill measures a character's ability to live off the land, find food and water and safe trails and camp-sites in the wilderness. Navigation is also a part of the Survival skill, as is handling boats. If a character spends a day hunting for provisions, he finds sufficient food to feed one person for a day per Degree of Success. See the 'Playing Age of Arthur' Chapter for information on how Degrees of Success work.

Willpower

Specialisms: Courage, Resist torture, Resist the temptations of (specify vice)

The Willpower skill is used to resist attempts at persuasion, torture and for more general displays of single minded courage. An attempt to influence a character using the Charm or Performance skill is opposed by a Willpower Skill Test. Taking a Specialism indicates that the character is particularly motivated to resist whatever it indicates.

Willpower is used to determine the Composure Score (page 31).

Physical Skills

Agility

Specialisms: Be where the arrow isn't, Catch spear, Climbing, Leaping, Running, Swimming

Agility is a fairly general physical skill that covers such activities as running, swimming and climbing. It is also used to defend against the Ranged Combat skill. When determining the order of action in mortal combat, Agility is used to break ties if opponents Awareness skill is the same.

Brawling

Specialisms: Bare knuckle fighting, Club 'em!, Wrestling

The Brawling skill can be used both to attack and to defend in hand to hand combat and when using clubs or improvised weapons. A one handed improvised weapon or club always does +1 damage. A two-handed weapon of this nature always does +2 damage. The Brawling skill can also be used to wield other melee weapons, but they do basic Brawling damage as a one-handed or two-handed club when used in this way.

Melee Combat

Specialisms: Attack with Weapon (state type), Hero duels, Shield wall

This skill is the use of weapons for the individual warrior during hero duels or in wild and bloodthirsty melee. It also covers the use of weapons by the trusted stout warrior who stands in the shield wall, holding the line and supporting his brethren in the heat of close order battle.

Missile Combat

Specialisms: Horse archery, Weapon (state type)

This skill is used to make attacks with thrown weapons and missile weapons such as axes, slings, spears and bows. The Missile Combat skill can only be used to attack. To defend against Ranged Attacks the target must use the Agility skill.

Riding

Specialisms: Drive wagon, Racing, Riding in melee

The Riding skill governs the ability to ride horses and other riding animals and the ability to control animal-powered vehicles, such as carts and chariots.

Stealth

Specialisms: Conjuring tricks, Hiding, Open locks, Lockpicking, Sleight of hand, Shadow, Sneak

Most activities where a character desires to hide or stay unnoticed are governed by the Stealth skill. Using the Stealth skill needs at least some sort of cover. Generally, when Stealth is tested, it is rolled against another character's Awareness skill, or the highest Awareness skill of someone in a group.

As well as sneaking around, the Stealth skill also includes sleight of hand skills such as conjuring tricks, picking locks and stealing items directly from someone's belt. The first and last of these are also usually opposed by an observer's or victim's Awareness skill.

Strength

Specialisms: Endure pain, Feats of strength, Stamina

Strength measures both a character's muscle power and stamina. Tests for acts of endurance and brute force will be based on Strength.

Strength is used to determine the Health Score (page 31).

Social Skills

Charm

Specialisms: Bargaining, Diplomacy, Haggling, Persuasion, Seduction

The Charm skill measures a character's general likeability and powers of persuasion. Tests are made whenever the character tries to influence another through essentially honest means, or tries to make another character like him. Persuasion attempts through the Charm skill are opposed by Willpower.

Only individuals and small groups are affected by the Charm skill.

Contacts

Specialisms: A particular town, Profession, Social group, Taverns and dens of iniquity

A Contacts Test is made to find potentially helpful non-player characters belonging to a particular profession or within a particular organisation, social group or kingdom. Any such character found with this skill will be willing to help the character in some capacity, possibly for pay. If the Contacts Test has a Degree of Success of 3 or more then the character is very helpful and will support without the need for any further incentive.

On the other hand, if the Test fails, the character can find an enemy rather than a potential ally.

Deception

Specialisms: Con, Disguise, Trick

Attempts to trick and lie are governed by the Deception skill. Deception attempts are generally opposed by the potential victim's Empathy skill.

A character can also attempt to disguise himself using the Deception skill. It takes about an hour to prepare a disguise and needs appropriate materials. A character cannot disguise himself as a specific individual, only, at best, a particular type of person. When Deception is used in a disguise attempt, it is opposed by Awareness.

Empathy

Specialisms: Children, Fae, Kings, Men, Women

Empathy Tests can be made to guess when someone is trying to conceal something, whether the truth or an emotion. A Test can also be made to attempt to get some insight into someone's motivation or personality, to reveal something beyond the obvious and the visual.

Attempts to trick the character using the Deception skill are opposed by Empathy. Further, the Empathy skill is used to determine the order in which people act in social conflicts, with the higher Empathy skill going first.

Intimidation

Specialisms: Physical presence, Torture, Verbal taunting

The Intimidation skill is used to threaten another character. It can be used to cow another character, or to attempt to force the other character to do something or not do something. Although a character may get his or her own way with the intimidation skill, the target is unlikely to be pleased with him or her afterwards. Intimidation attempts are usually opposed by Willpower.

Languages

As explained in Chapter 2, British player characters know two languages, Brythonic and Latin, which are the main languages of Britannia. Player characters from other backgrounds know the language of their background and *one* of these two languages. Minor non-player characters might just know one language.

This skill is needed to be literate, or to be fluent in other tongues. Here's how it works. Each level of the Languages skill grants either knowledge of a foreign language or knowledge of an alphabet, and literacy in that alphabet.

The most common languages available are Brythonic, the Celtic language of Britain, Goedelic, the language of the Gaels, Latin and Saxon. More exotic languages, such as

Greek, used for some classical texts, are also possibilities. Most of these languages are quite broad, in that they include several dialects, which we do not distinguish between for game purposes.

Alphabets available include Latin, which is used to write down both Latin and Brythonic, Greek, which is sometimes useful for deciphering ancient scholarly works, Ogham, the secret alphabet of the druids and used to write Goedelic and sometimes Brythonic, and the Futhark runes, which are used by the few literate Saxons.

Leadership

Specialisms: Gather the flock, Lead warband, Rally troops, Rule kingdom, Steward of the land

Britannia needs great leaders to free the land from the Saxons, people that can inspire others to unite against the common foe, thwart the Fae courts and return the land to prosperity and freedom. Leadership is the ability to organise, inspire and direct groups of people and whole kingdoms to act together. The skill is particularly used in the Battles chapter (page 118).

A successful Leadership Test, as a manoeuvre, against a difficulty of 2, creates motivation, courage and belief in the target audience. Place a temporary Aspect on a scene or individual related to this with the first use available for free.

Performance

Specialisms: Boasting, Oratory, Play (state instrument), Singing, Storytelling

Performance Skill Tests are made to impress a crowd of people. The Performance skill includes boasting in the lord's hall, rousing oratory, singing, storytelling and playing a musical instrument.

Unlike the Charm skill, the Performance skill can influence whole crowds. Performance cannot be used directly to persuade someone to pursue a particular course of action, but it can be used to place an Aspect on a crowd or scene.

Wealth

A character's Wealth skill is likely to frequently vary, though it is selected in the same way as any other skill in the process of character creation. Rules for the Wealth skill, and buying things, can be found in chapter 4.

A character with high social rank, a noted hero, a prince or even a king will usually have high Wealth, though in the current era of chaos impoverished kings are not unheard of. The Wealth score represents resources that can be freely spent on other things. For many rulers, most of their resources are tied up to the running of the kingdom.

As a guideline, some things which can be done at various Wealth scores are:

Wealth Score	What you can do.
0	Almost nothing without selling something or somehow gaining more money.
1	Buy basic necessities: cheap clothes, food, drink in a tavern.
2	Buy a riding horse or good weapon.
3	Comfortably afford most weapons, good clothes, food and wine.
4	Buy a large town house, pay and maintain a small staff of servants.
5	Maintain a guard of 10 mercenaries out of personal funds.
6	Buy a sailing ship or country villa.
7	Build a fortress, maintain an army of 100 mercenaries out of personal funds.
8	Maintain an army of 300 mercenaries out of personal funds.

Magical Skills

Magical skills are learnt as a result of the stories and tales that are developed in character generation. There needs to be a good reason for a character to have a magical skill. These reasons should be reflected by a relevant Aspect. In addition to this Aspect, a relevant Stunt must be taken for each magical skill learned.

We only give brief descriptions of these skills here. A full description can be found in Chapter 9. Note that all of these skills can have their scope increased (sometimes significantly) by further Stunts.

Divination [style]

This skill represents training in a specific style of divination which can be used to find out information that the character does not know. The difficulty of the Test is based on how obscure the information is. Each style of divination is a different skill. Examples include astrology, dream visions and ectomancy (divination from inspecting the innards of a sacrificial animal). For further details, see page 127.

Druidic Magic

Druidic magic is used to perform a manoeuvre which calls upon the favour or displeasure of the old gods. Mechanically, a skill Test at difficulty 2 is made in order to place a temporary Aspect representing this pleasure or curse on a target. As with all Aspects placed by manoeuvres, this Aspect may be used once for no Fate Point cost by the character (for a blessing) or his enemies (for a curse). Further details can be found on page 128.

Faith

The Faith skill is a talent of the most dedicated worshippers of the Christian God. Faith is used as a personal defence against magical attacks and to neutralise hostile magic. The character can also spend a Fate Point to use his Faith skill as a defence against a magical attack directed against someone else. For further details, see page 130.

Glamour

The Glamour skill is the magic of the Fae and those with Fae blood. It deals with temporary illusions which only last a few minutes. Some stunts can boost the duration of Fae magic. Most uses of the Glamour skill involve a difficulty 2 skill Test, or an opposed Test made against another's Awareness skill. Further details can be found on page 130.

Plant and Root

Both magical and mundane herbalism are represented by the Plant and Root skill. The main use of the skill is to prepare infusions. An infusion grants a temporary Aspect for a scene, depending on its nature, when it is taken. Such an Aspect can be used once for no Fate Point cost. It should be noted that preparing an infusion needs a well-equipped kitchen and takes an entire day. For further details, see page 132.

A character with the Plant and Root skill can be assumed to have a number of infusions at hand equal to his skill level.

Rune Magic

Rune Magic is one of the two main skills of the Saxon wizards. An object enchanted with a rune, which requires a Fate Point to be spent and a Rune Magic Test at difficulty 2 to be made, has a permanent Aspect representing the rune magic. Normally, engraving a Rune takes a full day. Further details and mechanics can be found on page 132.

Note that in order to learn the rune magic skill, the character must know the Futhark Runes as one of his languages gained using the Languages skill.

Shapechanging

A character with the Shapechanging skill knows how to turn into various animal forms. One form is known per skill level. Changing to animal form (though not back to human) requires the character hold a specially prepared animal skin. One with this skill begins play with an animal skin for each form known. If need be, another skin can be prepared from a slain animal of the relevant type. Making another skin takes a full day.

Each change of form costs a Fate Point. The character's belongings and clothes do not change with him. For further details and mechanics, see page 133.

Stunt Examples

Below is a large list of ready to play example Stunts for you to use for your heroes and to provide inspiration for Stunts of your own. The type of Stunt (as described in chapter 2. 'Creating Characters' on page 29) is listed after the Stunt name. A few stunts require the character to have a relevant Aspect before they can be learned. These stunts are marked with the symbol (*).

Mental Stunts

Bardic Memory [New Skill Use]

One who has this Stunt has memorised songs dealing with a vast range of subjects and is skilled at interpreting them to extract useful information. This means he may use the Performance skill to support any Lore skill. Even Lore skills a character does not normally possess can be used as if he has them at level 1.

Craftsman [New Skill Use]

This Stunt grants the character a second related Profession skill at the same level as an existing Profession skill. It can be taken more than once.

If one of these Profession skills is increased as a result of experience, then both increase a level.

Danger Sense [Ignore Difficulty or Restriction]

A character with this Stunt is never penalised when ambushed or otherwise attacked by surprise. Instead he can always act normally in a fight, even acting before an attacker who surprises him if his Awareness skill is high enough.

Instant Impression [Ignore Difficulty or Restriction]

A character with this Stunt does not have to spend time searching when using the Investigation skill, but can find what he is looking for (if it is there and the Test succeeds) within a few seconds or a single turn. This can be used during combat or any other fast-paced situation.

Jack of All Trades [New Skill Use]

The character can spend a Fate Point to temporarily gain, for a scene, a skill he does not ordinarily know. The new skill is at level 1, and remains for the entire scene.

Lodestone [Specialism]

The character always knows which way is north, even underground or within a Fae realm. He gains a +2 bonus to Survival Tests made for the purposes of navigation and is unlikely ever to get completely lost.

Many Tongues [Extra Capacity]

The character knows twice as many extra languages or alphabets as his level in the Languages skill would normally allow.

Planned Assault [Specialism]

A character leading a force in battle can make a Strategy and Tactics Test against difficulty 2 to grant everyone under his command a +1 bonus to all combat skills in the first turn of a fight. The Stunt can also be used by a general in mass combat. In this case, the first Strategy and Tactics Test made to make an attack within the battle has a +1 bonus.

The bonuses for this stunt and the Heroic Inspiration stunt on page 49 can be stacked.

Scholar [New Skill Use]

This Stunt grants the character a second Lore skill at the same level as one of his or her existing Lore skills. It can be taken more than once.

If one of these Lore skill is increased as a result of experience, so is the other.

Strong-Willed [Extra Capacity]

The character has an extra Composure stress point for every level of the Willpower skill, instead of for every two levels. For example, a character with this stunt and a Willpower skill of four has $3+4=7$ points of Composure stress.

Physical Stunts**Berserker Rage [Specialism] (*)**

The player of a character with this stunt can spend a Fate point to enter a killing rage, which increases all damage inflicted in hand to hand combat by 1. In order to have this stunt, the character must have an Aspect indicating his uncontrolled lust for carnage in battle. This Aspect may be compelled to force the character to seek out melee combat when retreat would be a better idea, or to blind him with anger, making him strike friend and foe alike.

Climb Like a Spider [Specialism]

All Agility Tests made to climb have a +2 bonus.

Counterstrike [New Combat Application]

If the character successfully defends himself in hand to hand combat, and has a shield, then he can immediately spend a Fate Point to inflict damage on an opponent as if the defence were an attack with the same degree of success. As usual, the counterstriker adds his weapon's damage and the defender subtracts the absorption score of any armour before the result is applied.

Dirty Fighter [Specialism]

Bonuses gained from using an Aspect placed on an opponent or the environment in close combat are increased from +2 to +3. The fighter need not place the Aspect himself to get this bonus.

Fighting Style [Specialism]

The character favours a particular weapon or type of fighting, such as two daggers, the hunting bow, a two-handed battle-axe, a gladius and shield, or boxing. A fighting style can be either offensive or defensive. An offensive style grants a +1 bonus to all attack rolls. A defensive style can only be taken for a hand to hand weapon, and grants a +1 bonus to all defence rolls.

This Stunt can be taken more than once, for multiple fighting styles, but only one bonus can apply at a time.

Heroic Charge [Specialism]

When a character with this Stunt charges into close combat or brawling, the first attack made has a +2 bonus to damage, if successful.

Precision Shot [Ignore Restriction or Difficulty]

All attacks made with ranged weapons ignore two points of armour.

Quick [Specialism]

The character has a +2 bonus to Awareness for the purposes of initiative.

Skin Like Iron [New Combat Application]

The character can use his Strength skill instead of a combat skill to defend himself in personal combat.

Tough [Extra Capacity]

The character has an extra Health stress point for every level of the Strength skill, instead of for every two levels. For example, a character with this stunt and a Strength skill of four has $3+4=7$ points of Health stress.

A large animal, or being with supernatural might (not a player character) might have this Stunt more than once. In that case, each time it is taken after the first add a number of stress points equal to the Strength score.

Vanish [Ignore Restriction or Difficulty]

The character can attempt to use the Stealth skill for short periods of time, even when there is no cover. As usual, those who seek to spot the character must make opposed Awareness Tests to notice him or her.

Social Stunts

Aura of Fear [New Combat Application]

A character with this Stunt is incredibly frightening on the battlefield, so much so that enemies will fear to approach. He can use his Intimidation skill as a defence against attacks in close combat.

Belonging [Specialism]

With this Stunt, the character owns something that is beyond his usual resources. For example it could be a villa, a sought-after treasure or a minor magical item. The cost of the belonging can be no more than 2 more than a character's Wealth skill level. A character can take this Stunt twice to own something even more valuable, worth 4 more than a character's Wealth skill level, with the table's agreement.

If the character has an Aspect related to the item as well as this Stunt, he may have a magical item, as described in chapter 4, regardless of its theoretical cost.

Cutting Retort [Specialism]

If a character with this stunt suffers composure damage, the next use of a social skill in the same scene has a +2 bonus.

Devastating Wit [Specialism]

When a character uses the Performance skill to mock a target, the composure stress inflicted has a +1 bonus.

Elegant [Specialism]

As long as the character has an hour or so to prepare for a formal event, and dresses appropriately, he or she gains a +1 bonus to his Charm skill for the duration of the event. Dressing appropriately is a matter of time rather than any particular expense. The character's fashion sense is sufficient that he can make almost anything look absolutely fantastic.

However, if something happens to ruin the character's look, for example mud being thrown on their fashionable clothes, then the bonus no longer applies.

Heroic Inspiration [New Skill Use]

A character with this Stunt who is leading a force into battle can, at any point, spend a Fate Point and make a Leadership Test at difficulty 2 to give all of those commanded a +1 bonus to all combat skills for the rest of the fight. This bonus applies both in personal combat and mass combat. However, only one such bonus can apply at a time.

The bonuses for this stunt and the Planned Assault stunt on page 47 can be stacked.

Martyr to the Cause [New Skill Use]

If a character chooses to take a mental Consequence in a social contest, such as a debate or a trial, he or she may spend a Fate Point to inflict two points of stress to the one who caused it.

In descriptive terms, an opponent succeeds in attacking the character, but makes his overall argument or cause look bad in the process.

Numbers are No Defence [Ignore Difficulty or Restriction]

When the character uses Intimidate against a warband, the opponents gain no bonus to defence due to numbers.

Rally [New Skill Use]

Once per battle, the character can pay a Fate Point and make a Leadership Test against difficulty 2 to recover stress in mass combat, or restore a number of taken out members of a warband in a smaller battle. The amount of stress or people affected is equal to the degree of success. Obviously, the force cannot gain more people or stress than it had originally.

Warband [New Skill Use] (*)

A character with this Stunt has a devoted Warband (see page 113 in Chapter 7) of loyal followers. When this stunt is taken, the character should choose the skill of his followers. The number of people in a Warband depends on both the character's Leadership skill and the combat skill level of the members of the Warband. Typically a character could have an unskilled mob or a far smaller number of skilled elites. The precise numbers are in the following table.

Leadership Skill	Followers with skill 1	No. with skill 2	No. with skill 3	No. with skill 4
1	1			
2	3	1		
3	10	3	1	
4	30	10	3	1
5	100	30	10	3
6		100	30	10
7			100	30
8				100

For example, a character with a Leadership skill of 4 could have 30 followers with combat skill 1, 10 with combat skill 2, 3 with skill 3, or a single follower with skill 4.

Although a character with the Wealth behind him can hire large numbers of soldiers, those followers present through this Stunt are personally loyal to the character and will

have an Aspect indicating such. As long as a Warband is not wiped out, members who die in action are gradually replaced.

If the character's Leadership skill increases, he can increase either the size or the skill of his Warband (and for Leadership skills above 5 may have to increase Warband skill rather than size). Further, this Stunt can be taken more than once. The above numbers of followers are available each time it is taken. When the Stunt is taken more than once, the followers are not required to all have the same skill level. A character who has this Stunt twice might have a huge mob of followers as well as a small number of elite soldiers.

In order to take this Stunt, the character must have a relevant Aspect indicating his or her role as a Warband leader.

Supernatural Stunts

The following stunts grant a character minor magical powers. In order to learn any of these stunts, the character must have an appropriate Aspect, such as one that indicates the favour of a pagan god. Some godly Aspects, and stunts related to those gods, are found on page 135.

In some cases, animal stunts, as described in page 61 are also allowed to player characters with appropriate Aspects as supernatural stunts.

Bardic Protection [New Combat Application] (*)

By tradition, a qualified Bard is free to say what he likes in a performance and cannot be attacked or imprisoned as a result of the content, however insulting or inappropriate. During a performance a bard may, at least in principle, abuse a king without fear of physical reprisals, at least in the short term.

This Stunt gives such protection a real game effect. If a bard is physically attacked as a result of a performance, the skill Test made to deliver the performance acts as a defence against all attacks. It may be helpful for the player of a bard with this Stunt to record the result when making a contentious performance.

Note that Bardic Protection cannot be used as a defence against attacks made as a result of casting a satire using the Biting Satire Stunt, below.

Biting Satire [New Combat Application] (*)

A bard with this Stunt can spend a Fate Point and use the Performance skill to cause physical damage instead of mental damage to a target by satirising him. This special attack can be defended against by Willpower. If the attack is successful then it causes physical stress equal to the Degree of Success. The damaging performance must mock the victim of the attack, but contain at least an element of truth in its insults.

If the bard also has the Devastating Wit Stunt (see page 49) the damage is increased by one.

Blessing of the Sea God [Increased Capacity] (*)

When sailing, the character experiences near perfect conditions unless the weather is affected supernaturally. Daily travel distances are increased by 50%.

Dark Adapted Eye [Ignore Difficulty or Restriction] (*)

The character can see his or her surroundings perfectly in the dark. No extra difficulties for darkness apply, even when it is pitch black, and there is absolutely no source of light.

Healing Touch [Ignore Difficulty or Restriction] (*)

A character with this Stunt needs no special equipment and no more than a few seconds of time to use the Healing skill. All that is necessary is to briefly touch the bare flesh of the person that needs healing. The healing touch covers the treatment of wounds, diseases or poisons.

Using this stunt costs a Fate Point.

Far Shot [Ignore Difficulty or Restriction] (*)

With this stunt, any ranged combat weapon has a maximum range of four zones, regardless of its stated range in the equipment list.

Magic Resistance [New Skill Use] (*)

At the cost of a Fate Point, the character can attempt to use the Willpower skill against magical skills to neutralise the effects of magic. It can be used, at this Fate Point cost, as often as desired. This Stunt can be used both to counter a magical effect as it is being created and to end magic that is already in place. It has no effect on magical items, however.

Note that this stunt is less useful for a character who already has a magical skill that can be used to counter magic, unless their Willpower skill is significantly higher than their magical skill.

Second Sight [New Skill Use] (*)

The character can sense the presence of magic, including magical items and ongoing magical effects. Moreover, an Awareness Test can be made against a Fae being's Glamour skill to see any Fae glamour as the illusions they really are. This does not necessarily mean that the character can see what a glamour is hiding. For example, it might be obvious to the character when a Fae being is disguised by a glamour, but this need not mean they know what the Fae creature really looks like.

Song of Battle [New Skill Use] (*)

A character with this Stunt can use his Performance skill to influence the outcome of mass combat, in the same way as a character with the Druidic Magic, Faith or Glamour skills.

Touch of Epona [Ignore Difficulty or Restriction] (*)

Any horse the character touches is considered fully trained for as long as he is in physical contact. Even a wild horse can be ridden by the character with no penalties, and will not shy away from combat.

Weapon of Vengeance [Specialism] (*)

A character with this Stunt can, whilst holding a weapon, name a specific enemy and dedicating the weapon to that enemy's destruction. Doing this costs a Fate Point. The weapon does an extra 2 points of damage against that enemy.

Once this stunt is used, it cannot be reused for as long as the named enemy lives.

Woad Warrior [Specialism] (*)

A warrior with this stunt who strips naked and paints himself before a battle with designs in blue woad gains a measure of supernatural protection, having a +1 bonus to all skill Tests made for defence in the battle. He also has a +1 bonus to Intimidate Tests made to terrify enemy warriors.

The preparations for using this stunt take at least ten minutes. Note that this style of fighting has died out in most of Britannia, but remains amongst the Picts.

Stunts for Magical Skills**Divination****Diviner [Magical Calling]**

The Diviner Stunt is required to learn the Divination skill.

As Foreseen [New Skill Use]

Using this Stunt, the character can make a Divination Test and pay a Fate Point to declare, when faced with a new situation, that he has foreseen it to some extent. This lets him place an Aspect on the scene to reflect this foreknowledge or preparation. The Aspect can be used once by the diviner at no further Fate Point cost.

Call upon the Spirits of the Departed [New Skill Use]

A diviner with this Stunt can, in the presence of a body or at the location where someone has died, call upon the departed spirit to speak to him. The difficulty of the Divination

skill Test needed to do this is 2 if the one he seeks died in the last month. Those who have been dead for longer are much more difficult to find and contact. For the longer dead, increase the difficulty according to the time track on page 89.

Only the diviner and those with appropriate magical senses can see or hear the departed spirit. The spirit contacted is, in many ways, more of an echo knowing only what it did in life. It has the same personality as the once living person. It has no desire or need to cooperate with the diviner who summoned it. Further social skills may well be needed to get any use out of this Stunt.

The spirits of those who have received Christian burial cannot be summoned in this way.

Obscurement [New Skill Use]

A character with the obscurement Stunt is hard to pin down with other divinations. The difficulties of any divinations made against the character are increased by half the character's own divination skill.

Moreover, the character knows when someone else tries use a divination on him, though not any of the details. He may of course attempt a counter-divination of his own, at the usual difficulty and Fate Point cost, to attempt to discover this.

Druidic Magic

Druidic Training [Magical Calling]

The Druidic Training Stunt is required to learn the Divination skill.

Beloved of the Gods [Specialism]

If a druid has this Stunt, a temporary Aspect granted through his blessing grants a +3 bonus rather than a +2 bonus when it is used

Calling the Gods of Battle [Specialism]

A druid with this Stunt gains a +1 bonus to his Druidic magic skill when using it to influence the outcome of a mass combat, as described in chapter 8.

Curse Barrier [New Skill Use]

Using this Stunt, a druid can protect a portal or area with a barrier. In combat, the area protected is either described as part of the abstract system or, if maps are being used, a zone, or a border or barrier between zones. In either case, the curse barrier takes time to erect and needs physical materials such as bones and skulls, either animal or human.

Making a curse barrier also costs the druid a Fate Point. After the barrier is made, the materials used are left clearly visible, a sign of the ward's presence. Anyone crossing the barrier or entering a protected area suffers from a curse, decided when the barrier is

created, as if cursed by the druid in person. The victim can attempt to resist the curse normally.

If the physical signs of the barrier, the bones and skulls, are interfered with, destroyed or removed, the perpetrator is automatically cursed, with no chance to resist. Further, the curse is a long-term event as if the druid had spent a Fate Point when inflicting it. A curse barrier can only be safely dismantled by the druid who made it, or by another druid or Christian who succeeds at a Druidic Magic or Faith skill Test made against the Druidic Magic skill of the one who placed the curse.

Death Curse [Specialism]

At the moment of his death, the druid gains a free use of his Druidic magic skill at a +2 bonus. If this power is used to place a curse on an enemy, then the curse Aspect is especially powerful and provides a +4 bonus rather than a +2 bonus if brought into play. If the druid also has the Potent Curses Stunt, the bonus is increased to +5.

Potent Curses [Specialism]

When a curse inflicted by a druid comes into play, it provides a +3 bonus rather than a +2 bonus.

Ward [New Combat Application]

A ward created using Druidic magic and this Stunt can be placed on any other person in the vicinity at the cost of a Fate Point. It lasts for a scene. The result of the magic skill Test used to place the ward counts as a defence against all physical attacks for whatever remains of the scene, or until an attack penetrates the ward, beating the result of the initial skill Test.

The defence created by a ward is not physical, but rather causes attackers to suffer from bad luck.

Weathermonger [New Skill Use]

A character with the Weathermonger Stunt can use Druidic Magic to influence the weather in the area. A change in weather typically needs around four hours of constant ceremony before it takes effect.

Most Druidic magic skill Tests to affect the weather are at difficulty 2. For weather not normally appropriate to the season or climate (for instance snow in the Summer or healing warmth in the frosty winter), the difficulty is raised to 4. Creation of extreme weather conditions, such as blizzards and storms, requires a Test against a difficulty of 6, or even higher if there are further complicating factors.

A Druid can also attempt to affect the weather more quickly. The decrease in time adds to the difficulty of the Druidic Magic skill Test according to the time track on page 89.

Faith

True Faith [Magical Calling]

The True Faith Stunt is required to learn the Faith skill.

Consecrated Ground [New Skill Use]

A character with this Stunt can spend a Fate Point and perform a ceremony to bless an area, making it sacred to the Christian God and driving out other forms of magic. The area must be marked by a church, shrine, or at the very least a wooden cross placed in the ground. Consecration requires a Faith Test at difficulty 2, but this difficulty can be vastly increased if this Stunt is attempted at major pagan sites of worship, or magical circles such as Stonehenge.

Consecration typically needs around four hours of prayer before it takes effect. The character can also attempt to perform the ceremony more quickly. The decrease in time adds to the difficulty of the Faith skill Test according to the time track on page 89.

In the blessed area, for as long as the marker placed there stands, all Faith magic Tests get a +1 bonus. All other magic Tests have their difficulty raised by +1. The consecrated area is often the site of a church, or a part of the building, or a shrine. In terms of the combat system, the area protected is either described as part of the abstract system or, if maps are being used, a zone.

Divine Favour [New Skill Use]

The character can call upon God to bless an action, either one of his or that of an ally. The beneficiary of this blessing gains a temporary Aspect reflecting its nature. This temporary Aspect can be used once for free before vanishing.

Lay on Hands [New Skill Use]

The character can use the Faith skill to heal another person, as if using the Healing skill. However, the healing is all but instantaneous and needs no special ingredients or bandages, even against the deadliest of diseases or nastiest of wounds. All that is needed is to touch the one hurt and utter a brief prayer.

However, each use of this Stunt costs a Fate Point.

Prayer for Victory [Specialism]

A character with this Stunt gains a +1 bonus to Faith when using it to influence the outcome of a mass combat, as described in chapter 8.

Shield of Faith [Remove Restriction or Difficulty]

With this Stunt, the Faith skill can be used to defend against any attack, not just magical attacks.

Wrath of God [New Combat Application]

A character with this Stunt can use the Faith skill to attack magical creatures. Such an attack ignores armour, but can be defended against normally. It does damage equal to the degree of success. It is a ranged attack, with a maximum range of two zones.

Glamour**Fae-Blooded [Magical Calling]**

The Fae-blooded Stunt is required to learn the Glamour skill.

Battlefield Illusions [Specialism]

A character with this Stunt gains a +1 bonus to the Glamour skill when using it to influence the outcome of a mass combat, as described in chapter 8.

Distracting Illusions [New Combat Application]

The character can use the Glamour skill for defence in combat, whether close or ranged. At the cost of forsaking his or her main action, or paying a Fate Point, the character can also defend another.

Enduring Glamours [Remove Restriction or Difficulty]

The character can use the Glamour skill to create solid objects, though not solid moving objects. However, a sword, for example, created of glamour and made solid with this Stunt can be picked up and used normally.

Like other glammers, objects created out of glamour last just a minute as a default, but each Degree of Success in a skill Test made to create an object increases the time a glamour lasts, moving the time one step long the time track on page 89. One limitation of glamour-created objects however, is that they vanish when touched with iron.

Any object the glamour weaver can envision can be created and size is barely a factor. However, the object can be no more than a zone across. Objects with inherent artistic beauty or intricate moving parts can only be as good as their creator's understanding of such things. A relevant artistic or craft-based skill Test is required to create such an item, modified by the creator's Glamour skill.

Fade from Sight [New Skill Use]

A character with this Stunt can use the Glamour skill to cause an object or person to fade completely from sight. If a person is affected and does not remain completely still, his or her presence can be detected by someone who makes an Awareness Test that beats a Stealth roll with a +2 bonus.

Like other glammers, the illusion of invisibility lasts just a minute as a default. However, each Degree of Success in the Glamour skill Test to create this effect increases the time the

glamour lasts, moving the time one step along the time track on page 89. The illusion vanishes as soon as the person or object affected touches or is touched by someone else.

Perfect Disguise [Specialism]

This Stunt grants a +2 bonus to the Glamour skill when it is used to make someone resemble a different person. An illusory form granted using this glamour normally lasts around an hour. Note, however, that the touch of iron forces someone disguised by this Stunt into their true form.

Beyond being disguised, no particular skill modifiers or other advantages apply to taking on a new form, though the one affected by the glamour has the temporary Aspect Disguised as [person]. This temporary Aspect can be used and even compelled as normal.

One who is very familiar with the person whose features have been taken might recognise the one disguised as an impostor. This is decided as usual by and opposed Glamour and Awareness Test.

Vision of Terror [New Personal Combat Application]

This Stunt lets a character make composure attacks with the Glamour skill, attempting to overwhelm a foe with hideous illusions. If the character also has the Enduring Glamours Stunt, he can make physical attacks instead of composure attacks if desired.

Plant and Root

Hedge Magic [Magical Calling]

The Hedge Magic Stunt is required to learn the Plant and Root skill.

Brew Poisons [New Combat Application]

A character with this Stunt can use the Plant and Root skill to prepare effective poisons as infusions. A poison must be placed in a victim's food or drink, or on a weapon used to stab the unfortunate target. If placed on a weapon, the poison remains active for one scene, though only one dose at a time can be introduced in this way.

The victim of a poison must make a Test with their Strength opposed by the Plant and Root skill of the one who prepared the poison. If the result of the Plant and Root Test is higher than the result of the Strength Test, the victim immediately suffers damage to the Health stress score equal to the Degree of Success, as well as having a Poisoned Aspect that lasts the rest of the scene. As usual for Aspects placed by a manoeuvre (see page 88), this Aspect can be invoked by an opponent once at no Fate Point cost.

Healing Medicine [Specialism]

This Stunt increases power of an infusion made using the Plant and Root skill that places an Aspect that aids the Healing skill. The Aspect created by this infusion provides a +4 bonus to the Healing skill when used rather than +2.

Mindbane [New Skill Use]

The character can prepare a drug which weakens the will of one who takes it, making them prone to suggestion and more easily manipulated. One who takes this drug, usually as a result of trickery, must make a Test of Strength opposed by the Plant and Root Test of the one who prepared the drug. If the victim loses the opposed Test, they suffer Composure damage equal to the Degree of Success, and a Weak Willed Aspect that lasts the rest of the scene. As usual for Aspects placed by a manoeuvre (see page 88), this Aspect can be invoked by an opponent once at no Fate Point cost.

Ointment of True Vision [New Skill Use]

A herbalist with this Stunt can use the Plant and Root skill to prepare an eye ointment that lets one who uses it sense magic and, potentially, Fae Glamour. The ointment lasts for one hour if the Plant and Root Test succeeds against a difficulty 2. Each Degree of Success on the Test increases the duration of the effect according to the time track on page 89.

To sense Fae Glamour, an Awareness Test is also needed, opposed by a Glamour roll made by the one producing the glamour. A successful Awareness Test does not necessarily mean the character can see what a glamour is hiding, just that something in particular is a glamour.

Thus, for example, the character can see when someone is disguised by a glamour, but not who they really are.

Rune Magic**Rune Wizardry [Magical Calling]**

The Rune Wizardry Stunt is required to learn the Rune Magic skill.

Blessing of Wotan [New Skill Use]

The Rune Magic skill, which is normally used to enchant objects, cannot normally be used to directly influence the outcome of a mass battle, as described for Druidic Magic, Faith Magic and Glamour in chapter 8. However, a wizard with this Stunt can use Rune Magic rituals in this way, calling upon the god Wotan for assistance in the battle.

Empowered Enchantment [Remove Difficulty or Restriction]

A character with this Stunt has used Rune Magic to create an enchanted item more powerful than usual. The Aspect the item is enchanted with can be used once per scene for free at no Fate Point cost. This Stunt can be taken more than once. Each time it is taken, the character has another magical rune-inscribed item.

Runecasting [New Skill Use]

A wizard with this Stunt can throw a set of rune-carved stones on the ground and look at how they land to divine information. The attempt costs a Fate Point and requires a Rune Magic skill Test.

The Test is at difficulty 2 if the information is general and widely known and concerns the present or recent past. The difficulty is increased by 2 if the information desired concerns the distant past or near future and by 2 again if the information sought is obscure or specific. Multiple increases to difficulty might apply.

A player can also use the Runecasting Stunt (and pay the usual Fate Point cost) to state information concerning the divination rather than asking the Storyteller for details. The Storyteller may either accept the statement of information, or modify it and return the Fate Point to the player.

Runes of Power [Specialism]

When the wizard wields an object he has enchanted with runes, he may spend a Fate Point to use the Aspect on the item and gain a +3 bonus instead of the usual +2 bonus.

Runewarding [type] [New Skill Use]

To use this Stunt the wizard inscribes appropriate runes on a stone and buries it or embeds it in a doorpost to create a barrier against a particular type of supernatural force or creature.

Examples of Runewardings

- British gods (this ward is mainly a protection against Druidic magic)
- Dragons
- Elves (the Saxon name for the Fae)
- Giants
- Spirits of the dead

The wizard attempts a Rune Magic Test at difficulty 2 and spends a Fate Point to create a ward. Malicious forces need to successfully win in a Willpower Test against this difficulty to be able to move beyond the protected area, or use their powers within that area. The area is either abstractly described or protects a zone on a tactical map. Each type of ward is a different Stunt, which has to be learnt separately.

Shapechanging

Skin Changer [Magical Calling]

The Skin Changer Stunt is required to learn the Shapechanging skill.

Animal Speech [New Skill Use]

A character with this Stunt can speak to and understand animals of the same general type as one of the forms that he knows. For example, a character who can change into an eagle could communicate with all birds, or a character who could change into a wolf can speak to both wolves and dogs.

Note that this communication is limited by the fact that the character is talking to an animal and the animal can only communicate things it understands.

Favoured Form [Remove Restriction or Difficulty]

The character need not pay a Fate Point to change to or from a particular animal form. This is decided when this Stunt is taken.

Many Forms [Extra Capacity]

The character knows two animal forms per level of the shapechanging skill instead of one.

Natural Shapechanger [Remove Restriction or Difficulty]

A character with this Stunt does not need an animal skin to change to animal form.

Shapechange Other [Extra Capacity]

If the character has a spare animal skin, he can change someone else into animal form who voluntarily dons the skin. The change lasts until the caster decides to undo it. As usual, there is a Fate Point cost to change form. Either the shapechanger or the one changed can pay this cost.

If the character also has the Natural Shapechanger Stunt, no animal skin is needed when someone else changes form. Indeed, he or she can even change an unwilling target into an animal, although an opposed Willpower Test is allowed to resist the shape-changing magic.

Animal Stunts

Some of these Stunts might be allowed for player characters with the table's approval, but will then be supernatural in nature, and require an appropriate Aspect. Animal stunts which are allowed as supernatural stunts are marked with the (*) symbol. Others are reserved exclusively for animals and supernatural creatures.

Armoured Skin [Extra Capacity] (*)

The creature has Absorption 1 even when unarmoured. It can be taken more than once by animals and supernatural creatures for a higher bonus.

Beast of Burden [Extra Capacity] (*)

A being with this Stunt can carry twice as much as its Strength score would normally indicate.

Fire Breathing [New Combat Application]

This Stunt is not appropriate for player characters, or even mundane animals, but rather is intended for magical creatures such as dragons. A creature with this Stunt can breathe fire. Breathing fire allows the creature to make a ranged attack using its Strength skill. The attack has a range of up to 3 zones and has no damage bonus. Damage can be fearsome for creatures with a high Strength skill.

Flight [New Skill Use]

A creature with this Stunt can fly at approximately the land speed of a non-flying creature of the same size, though at a cost, as it is likely to be ungainly on land. A creature with both the Flight Stunt and the Swift Stunt (below) can fly at twice this speed, or more for short distances.

Any Tests involving Flight uses the Agility skill. This Stunt is not recommended for player characters.

Natural Weapons [Specialism] (*)

Brawling attacks made without any weapons have a +2 bonus to damage. It can be taken more than once by animals and supernatural creatures for a bigger bonus.

Scent Tracking [New Skill Use] (*)

This Stunt means the creature has very sensitive sense of smell. It is capable of telling subtle differences between scents if an Awareness Test is made at an appropriate difficulty. Further, a Test can be made at difficulty 2 (or, as usual, higher if there are complications) to track an individual or creature by following a scent trail.

Swift [Extra Capacity] (*)

Over long distances, a being with this Stunt can move twice as fast as its Agility score would normally indicate with its main means of travel (so, for example, a bird with this Stunt could fly swiftly, but not necessarily walk swiftly). Within combat, if a map is used, the creature can move one extra zone each turn.

Water Creature [New Skill Use] (*)

This Stunt lets a creature move in the water at the same speed as a human can move on land. Further, the being can survive underwater either for around an hour by holding its breath (make a Strength Test if doubt ever arises), or indefinitely if it has gills. However, in the latter case, the creature cannot breathe when out of water.





30.13

Chapter 4 - Wealth and Equipment

Wealth and Buying Things

In Age of Arthur, a character's exact resources are not tracked. Instead, every character has a Wealth score which is an abstract measure of spending power. Unlike most other skills, wealth can go up or down depending on a character's circumstances. For example, finding steady employment, or being granted a villa and surrounding lands will add to Wealth. Overspending, or having one's lands overrun by Saxons, will cause Wealth to fall.

When it comes to buying things using wealth, any service, piece of property or treasure has an associated Cost. This cost is a number, generally between 1 and 10. Buying something out of the ordinary for the character requires him to make a Wealth Test, with difficulty equal to the Cost of the item.

Rule

Only a character with a Wealth score of at least 1 can attempt to buy something out of the ordinary. If a Wealth Test to buy an item fails, the buyer's Wealth falls by 1. If the item has a Cost of Wealth or less, a failed Wealth test still buys the item. If the item has a Cost greater than Wealth, a failed Wealth test does not get the item, as well as Wealth being reduced.

Any reduction in a character's Wealth score lasts until his finances have time to recover; typically a few months.

Precisely what out of the ordinary means when it comes to making purchases is open to the interpretation of the table, but Wealth checks are certainly needed when:

- Buying an item with a cost of one less than a character's Wealth score, or higher.
- Buying equipment for henchmen, or other player characters.
- Buying something rare where the character is, regardless of the listed cost.

Treasure

One time cash rewards, or hoards of valuables are known as Treasure. Any treasure found has a Value, from 1 to 10. Treasure can be used instead of Wealth to purchase an item with a Cost less than or equal to its Value. After the purchase, the Treasure's Value is reduced by the item's Cost. Once Treasure is reduced to zero, it has all been spent.

A character might have more than one cache of Treasure. Different caches are kept track of separately, and not combined.

Selling an item gives a character Treasure with a value equal to one less than its cost. It is usually the case that the selling of an item regains less money than it cost to buy. Of course, just because an item has value, it does necessarily mean it is easy to find a buyer. After all, who would want to buy a used villa in an area full of rampaging Saxons?

Weapons and Armour

Armour

In Age of Arthur, armour reduces damage from successful attacks. The amount of damage reduction is the armour's Absorption score. The following armour is available in the Age of Arthur setting.

Armour	Absorption	Cost	Notes
Leather Cuirass	1	2	
Ring Mail	2	3	-1 penalty to physical non-combat skills
Lorica Squamata	3	4	-2 penalty to physical non-combat skills
Lorica Hamata	3	5	-2 penalty to physical non-combat skills. Has the Aspect: Heavy Armour
Shield	+1 extra	1	+1 damage if used as a weapon.

In the above table, Lorica Squamata is Roman scale mail, one of the standard armours of the late Roman Empire. Lorica Hamata, by contrast, is a chain mail shirt, which was once popular both with Roman officers and some Celtic chieftains. It is now extremely expensive. A well-maintained suit of Lorica Hamata is a sign of great prestige.

A character using a shield adds a +1 bonus to the absorption rating of any armour. Using a shield without wearing armour gives an absorption rating of 1.

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons are used with either the melee combat or brawling skill. The damage score of a weapon adds to the damage caused by a successful attack.

Note the brawling skill is used to fight unarmed and to wield clubs and improvised weapons. The melee combat skill is used for all other weapons. Actually, other weapons can be used with the brawling skill, but when used in this way, do a mere +1 damage if one-handed, or +2 damage if two-handed, as if they were mere improvised clubs.

The following melee weapons are common in the Age of Arthur setting.

Weapon	Damage	Cost	Notes
Unarmed	0	-	
Club/Improvised	1	0	
Big Club/Improvised	2	0	Two-handed
Staff	1	0	Two-handed, +1 to melee defence
Dagger	1	1	Can be thrown
Hand Axe	1	1	Can be thrown
Seax	2	1	
Mace	2	1	
Gladius	2	2	Ignore one point of armour.
Battleaxe	3	2	Two-handed
Small Spear	2	2	Can be thrown
Heavy Spear	3	2	Two-handed
Lance	3	2	Mounted combat only
Spatha	3	3	
Celtic Long Sword	3	4	Ignore one point of armour. Has the Aspect: Weapon of renown

In the above table, a seax is a large knife, bigger than a dagger, but smaller than a sword, carried as a tool and back-up weapon by the Saxons. The gladius is the standard Roman short sword, whereas the spatha a larger sword used by both heavy infantry and cavalry. Most swords have similar game properties to the gladius. The Celtic Long Sword listed in the above table is a prestigious weapon, owned by warlords and kings. It is usually seriously ornamented. When the owner of such a weapon dies, the sword may well be buried with him.

Some of the notes in the above table may need further explanation. A melee weapon that *can be thrown* is also a ranged weapon, with short range. A weapon that *ignores one point of armour* treats an opponent's Absorption score (if above zero) as if it were one lower. One that is marked as *mounted combat only* can only be deployed effectively from horseback. A *two-handed* weapon cannot be used while holding a shield. Finally, a weapon that has *+1 to melee defence* grants a +1 bonus to Melee Combat Skill Tests made to defend against melee or brawling attacks.

Ranged Weapons

The following ranged weapons are common. Note that ranges can either be used narratively, or, if a map is used in combat, used to give the maximum number of 'zones' within which the weapon is effective. Here, short range means up to 2 zones, medium range means up to 3 zones, and long range means up to 4 zones. For more details, see the Mortal Combat chapter on page 104.

Weapon	Damage	Cost	Range	Notes
Thrown Stone	0	0	Short	Thrown only
Sling	0	0	Medium	
Dagger	1	1	Short	Thrown melee weapon
Hand Axe	1	1	Short	Thrown melee weapon
Shortbow	1	1	Medium	
Javelin	2	1	Medium	Thrown only
Pilum	2	1	Short	Thrown only, ignore one point of armour
Spear	2	2	Short	Thrown melee weapon
Longbow	2	3	Long	
Crossbow	2	3	Medium	+1 bonus to attacks, must take an action to reload between shots.

Some of the notes in the above table may need further explanation. A weapon that *ignores one point of armour* treats an opponent's Absorption score (if above zero) as if it were one lower. A weapon that is *thrown only* or a *thrown melee weapon* cannot be used again as a ranged weapon in the same battle until it is retrieved. A *thrown melee weapon* may also be used in close combat. Finally, the crossbow *takes an action to reload*, which means that once it is fired, a round must be spent reloading it, rather than say attacking, before it can be used again. The *+1 bonus to attacks* grants a +1 bonus to Ranged Combat Skill Tests made to fire it to attack.

Everything Else

Clothing

Typical jewellery includes torques, armbands and brooches. More important jewellery often has an associated Aspect. Both expensive clothes and jewellery (though not necessarily of the most expensive sort in this day and age) form a part of the typical costume of a noble.

Item	Cost
Cheap Clothes	0
Work/Travel Clothes	1
Cold Weather Clothing	2
Embroidered Robe	2
Expensive Clothes	3
Fur Cloak	3
Jewellery	3 to 6

Consumables, Lodging and Services

Item	Cost
Barrel of Beer	1
Bottle of Wine	2
Rare Spices	2
Rented Rooms in City	1 to 3 per month
Drink in Tavern	0
Cheap Meal	0
Respectable Meal	1
Impressive Meal	2 to 3
Inn Food and Lodging	1 per night
Guide or Messenger	1 per task
Servant	1 per month
Skilled Cook	2 per month
Mercenary	2 per month
Healer	1 per patient
Tutor	2 per month
Engineer	3 per month
Entertainer	1 to 2 per day
Group of ten mercenaries	4 per month
Pay and upkeep of small army (100 men)	6 per month
Large Town House	4
Construction of village cottage	3
Country Villa	6
Construction of small fortress	7

Transport

Item	Cost	Notes
Riding Horse	2	
War Horse	3	
Cart	2	1 horse needed
Chariot	3	2 horses needed
Rowing Boat	2	
Riverboat	4	
Small Sailing Ship	6	Minimum 6 crew needed

Specialist and Miscellaneous Equipment

Item	Cost	Notes
Basic Survival Equipment	1	Knife, cloak and means to make fire
Climbing Equipment	2	
Cooking Equipment	1	
Large tent	2	Sleeps up to four people
Rations for one month	1	
Trained Falcon	4	Adds +1 to Survival Tests to hunt.
Trained Dog	2	If a fighting dog, skills are as a wolf, as described on page 204.
Artisan's Tools	1	Tools required for one particular craft or profession. Different professions need different toolkits.
Book	1 to 3	
Healing Kit	1	
Merchant's Scales	1	
Musical Instrument	1 to 3	
Small Mirror	2	
Lockpicks	2	
Lock	3	
Perfume (per vial)	3	
Water Clock	4	
Writing Equipment	1	Ink, a quill and parchment

Equipment and Aspects

As a default, none of the items listed previously in this section give any modifiers to skills, with the exception of weapons and armour, or are in any way remarkable. It is possible, however, to pay extra for an item that is especially well-made, or has a distinguished history and perhaps a small amount of associated magic.

Any such item has an Aspect, indicating the way in which it is special. Such Aspects can be used as normal. Such an item has its cost increased by one, or possibly more for very special objects. Rune engraved items of course have Aspects, and many senior Saxon warriors have a weapon or perhaps armour marked with runes.

Magic Items

Magical items in the Age of Arthur are rare and wondrous things. They are always unique. There is absolutely no such thing as a 'standard' magical device. The creation of such unique artefacts is beyond all but the most powerful wielders of magic. Such artifice is more in the realm of the gods than of ordinary mortals. Making a magical item similar to those described here is likely to first involve an epic quest to gather magical or legendary materials. The precise details of the process is for the table to decide, but should be far from easy or straightforward and all but impossible to repeat.

All that said, a player character can begin play with a magical item if he has both the Belonging Stunt and an Aspect linking him to the artefact, or indicating ownership. After all, player characters are unique individuals with the potential for greatness, precisely the sort of people liable to own such powerful objects.

Magic Item Creation

A magic item is a mundane object, with all of the properties of that object- for example, a magical sword is still a sword. Due to its magical nature, it will never break by accident.

In terms of game mechanics, a magical item (including those allowed to the player characters with a relevant Stunt and Aspect) is described with an Aspect, and two Powers. These Powers are similar to Stunts. The Stunts list, or the powers of the magic items below, provide examples.

The following is a list of some famous magical items. Tales are told of these wondrous artefacts by bards throughout Britannia.

The Cauldron of Dirrnach

This cauldron belongs to an ancient giant, Dirrnach, who guards it fiercely. Any who want to make use of the cauldron will need to offer Dirrnach something he wants, perhaps a service, or else find a way to trick him.

When the cauldron is filled with boiling water, one inside is not scalded, but rather healed. A quick dip in the cauldron can help a healer cure any injury or disease. Even someone who has been killed in the last day can perhaps be brought back to life provided the body is essentially intact and there have been no funerary rites.

Aspect: Cauldron of healing.

Power: Healing Tests have instant results when used on one who has been immersed. For example, a healing Test can be made to fully heal a broken arm, or other extreme Consequence, within minutes.

Power: A healer using the cauldron can spend a Fate point to allow a healing skill Test to be attempted even when not normally possible, for example against incurable diseases or poisons, or to heal the recently dead.

The Chariot of Morgan Mwynfawr

This golden chariot is designed to carry two people and is drawn by a team of four horses. The chariot has the remarkable property that it can travel over any terrain, even mountains or across water, as easily as on a well-maintained Roman road or arena track.

Aspect: Four Horse Chariot.

Power: +1 to Riding skills of the one driving the chariot.

Power: Travel over any terrain at the same speed as on a road.

The Cloak of Padarn and The Ring of Eluned

The Cloak of Padarn is a red cloak of the kind once worn by an officer in the Roman army. When donned, the cloak's wearer becomes invisible, and is completely undetectable by mundane means if he stays still. If he moves, those who are alert might discern a shadowy outline.

Aspect: Cloak of Invisibility

Power: The wearer of the cloak cannot be detected without magical senses if not moving.

Power: The cloak's wearer has a +2 bonus to Stealth if he moves

The Ring of Eluned is a plain gold band with similar powers to the Cloak of Padarn. If both items are worn together, the above Stealth bonus increases to +3, and even one with magical senses needs an Awareness Test is needed to spot the wearer of the two items.

Dyrnwyn

Dyrnwyn was the sword of King Luwddoc of Gododdin, before he fell in battle against Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon. Luwddoc did not take the sword into his last battle, but had it hidden somewhere within the Wall of Antonine.

The sword Dyrnwyn resembles a Roman legionary gladius, though it is engraved with symbols of the sun and a bull, the symbols of Mithras. When wielded in battle, Dyrnwyn bursts into flame. The flames will not harm the wielder, as long as he remains brave and true, but a treacherous man or a coward will himself be burned.

Aspect: Fiery sword of the brave and true warrior.

Power: The sword burns a traitor or coward who tries to wield it for 2 points of physical stress per round.

Power: When the sword bursts into flame, it does +2 damage on any successful attack.

Note: The sword of Dyrnwyn is a gladius, and does +3 damage even if its magical powers are not used.

The Horn of Bran

The Horn of Bran is a gold-chased drinking vessel that fell into the hands of the High King's brother, Uther Pendragon, following conquests in northern Britain. The horn was buried with him. It has the magical property of always being full with any (non-magical) drink wished for by the one holding it. Used appropriately, the horn could be used to place an Aspect on one drinking from it, or from something it was poured into.

Aspect: Drinking horn of plenty.

Power: Place Aspect related to a drink on one drinking from the horn.

Power: Place Aspect related to the drink on something poured out of the horn.

The Mantle of Effron

This cloak has a seven-coloured tartan design, similar to that worn by a king, great druid, or someone of equal importance amongst the British and Gaels. One wearing the mantle has some resistance to fire, and is perfectly protected from the natural environment. He or she is protected from extremes of both cold and heat and will stay dry even in torrential rain.

Aspect: Princely cloak

Power: Complete protection from the natural environment.

Power: Absorption 2 against fire damage.

The Platter of Rydderch

The magical Platter of Rydderch appears to be a plain wooden plate. However, whatever food one wishes for when holding the plate appears on it. The food is delicious and nutritious, if such is desired and perfectly safe to eat. If the food is not consumed within an hour then it rapidly and nauseatingly rots. Thus the platter is useful for providing a feast, for example, but has less long-term utility.

Aspect: Whatever food you wish for.

Power: Place Aspect related to food on one eating from the platter.

Power: Provide endless sustenance for those eating from the platter.

The Sword of Albion

Albion was a legendary giant and first king of Britain, long, long before the Romans came near the island. His sword, a mere shortsword in the giant's hands, but a great blade needing two hands to use in those of an ordinary sized person, was forged by the smith god Goffannon himself.

This ancient weapon is sometimes simply called Albion. Other names of the sword are Caliburn and Excalibur. It was enchanted by the smith god to be able to cut through any defences. The protective qualities of armour and shields are ignored in battle. Perhaps more importantly, Albion is a potent symbol and said to be the sword of the true king of Britain. Its present whereabouts is unknown.

Aspect: Sword of Kings.

Power: The Sword of Albion is sharp enough to easily cut through anything.

Power: Attacks made with the Sword of Albion ignore two points of armour.

Note: The Sword of Albion is a giant-sized sword, which does +5 damage, but requires two hands to wield.



3.11.12

Chapter 5 - Playing Age of Arthur

This is the game part of the book. It describes the core rules of the game that are used to arbitrate outcomes when characters Test themselves against the elements and other characters. Who wins the fight between the two kingdoms' champions? Have the characters managed to sneak into the church undetected? Have the portents been correctly divined in the intricate patterns that glisten in the dry earth from the spurts of blood from the staggering death dance of the enemy sacrifice? Age of Arthur will help you to find out.

Rolling Dice

Player characters will be 'tested' when they use their abilities during the game. Fate is fickle and so all Tests have a random element that will partly determine the outcome. Age of Arthur uses 'Fudge Dice', special six sided die with two faces marked **+**, two faces blank and two faces marked **-**. Almost every dice roll in Age of Arthur uses four of these dice which we will call '4dF'. A single roll of 4dF, yields a range from -4 to +4. You add up the dice with **+**, subtract those with **-** and you have a total.

Example

Jason rolls 4dF, gaining dice showing **+****-****+**; two dice showing **+**, one dice showing **-** and one showing a blank. This is a dice total of 2 (for the two **+**) minus 1 (**-**), that is to say a total of +1.

For those delighting in statistics (go on, admit that's you) this yields a particular probability curve around which the game is built.

Roll	Odds	Percentage
-4	1/81	1.24
-3	4/81	4.95
-2	10/81	12.35
-1	16/81	19.75
0	19/81	23.46
1	16/81	19.75
2	10/81	12.35
3	4/81	4.95
4	1/81	1.24

The average roll on 4dF is 0. Most of the time, 4dF will provide a fairly small variation around this average.

But I don't have any Fudge Dice!

If you wish you can use ordinary six-sided dice reading each die result as: 1-2 as , 3-4 as blank and 5-6 as .

An alternative dice mechanic, using two six-sided instead of four Fudge dice to generate the same range of outcomes, can be found in the optional rules on page 199.

Aspects

Aspects are short phrases that help to illuminate something important about things in the story. Everything that can be described can potentially have Aspects: characters, monsters, objects, places, landscapes, buildings, kingdoms.

Rule

Apart from characters, something that the Storyteller decides to give Aspects will have between one and three of them, with one Aspect being more typical than three.

Some of the different types of Aspect that can be used are:

- A character's own Aspect, including your oath

These are covered in character generation.

- Equipment

Very special pieces of 'equipment' can be given Aspects such as valuable garments or heirloom and magical weapons.

- Opponent

Your opponent in a Test may have Aspects that you could bring into play to your advantage.

- Consequence

A Consequence is a more enduring result from a failed Test that the character has to describe to stay in the game. Typically these would be physical wounds, psychological torment or some sort of social disaster. Your character's Consequences can be exploited by their opponents and vice versa. The first time a Consequence is used by an opponent they can bring it into play without the cost of any Fate Points (see 78)

- Scene

The scene in which the Test takes place can also be described, possibly using the environment or the surrounding psychological atmosphere. The table may wish to suggest additional scene Aspects for them to use during Tests.

- Manoeuvre

A manoeuvre is an action carried out by a character to create a new Aspect that can be used by themselves or other friendly characters. It's the principal way that one character can assist another in undertaking a task. The first time a manoeuvre created Aspect is used it can be brought into play without the cost of a Fate Point.

- Map Zone

If using maps to visualise action scenes (page 104) then a particular zone or boundary could have an Aspect that can be used in play. Typically these Aspects are written straight onto the map for easy reference.

If the player has sufficient Fate Points then they are able to bring into play as many Aspects of any type as desired during a Test.

Oaths

Once an oath is agreed and spoken, all parties are bound to it. There is immense power to an oath. By making an oath you tell this world that something is true. You break the oath and the gods will be displeased, consequences must be faced.

Oaths can also be used for political advantage. It is common for kings to use the oaths that they have made to bind them to particular courses of action and, perhaps

more importantly, preventing them from making different alliances or taking contrary courses of action. Such hiding behind oaths is far from uncommon.

Breaking an oath can be dangerous. Any time an oath is broken by a character he takes a Consequence (see page 92). The Consequence can be either mild, moderate, or severe as decided by the Storyteller and can be brought into play by the player or others. This Consequence counts towards the usual three Consequence limit. It will not vanish until whatever the character did to break the oath is put right or becomes irrelevant by the passage of time.

There might be further story-related results from breaking an oath sworn on something held precious. For example, if a character swears an oath on his children's lives and then breaks it, dire things might happen. The effect of breaking such an oath could be the character's children being kidnapped or otherwise endangered; it need not be an automatic death sentence.

The power of oaths, of the truths that men speak and commit to, is diminishing. As the gods fade from the land, supplanted by the Christ god and the threatening Saxon gods, so the power of such words falters. The time will come when men will be able to make promises and not need to stand behind them. In a campaign game the Storyteller can decide that a broken Oath creates a temporary Aspect rather than a full blown consequence. If the balance in your games is towards a fading of Britain, with the Saxon gaining control, then the Oaths that bind the people together are weakened. In the suggested timeline this will be in the lead up to Camlan, the last battle and the fading of Britain. Such Aspects can be swapped and traded as any other as per the experience rules (page 196).

The Ebb and Flow of Fate

Fate Points

Age of Arthur uses Fate Points as a sort of currency to help shape the story being told. It takes Fate Points to bring Aspects into play so that they can influence the outcome of Tests. If you have Fate Points you will be able to make things happen, turn abject failure into roaring success, create a new direction to the story and influence other characters' actions.

Fate Points are a finite resource that will be spent to enliven play, promote conflict and to help characters come out of Tests smelling of roses rather than pushing up the daisies. Fate Points should be represented by using some sort of thematically appropriate token such as Roman coins, war rings, holy glass beads or conkers.

Players and the Storyteller will gain and spend Fate Points throughout a session of Age of Arthur. Summarised below are all the different ways that Fate Points can exchange hands, illustrating how to make the best of them and to make the game more fun.

Gaining Fate Points

Players will always be on the hunt for Fate Points. If they have a small stockpile of ready to spend Fate Points in front of them, they will play their characters with more bravado and take more risks.

Here are all the different ways to gain Fate Points:

Refresh

At the beginning of every game session there is a refresh. At a refresh, each player has their total Fate Points brought up to their character's Refresh Rate (usually 5, for starting characters). If a player already has more Fate Points than the Refresh Rate, they do not benefit from the refresh. Neither do they lose Fate Points.

As noted below, the Storyteller is also given a pool of Fate Points for her characters at the start of each session, usually 3 per player. If these Fate Points are not spent, they are lost, though they are of course regained at the start of each game session. These Fate Points are to be used by NPCs that are opposed to the PCs. If the Storyteller has a *significant* character that is friendly to the player characters, or at least on their side in a conflict, then they will have their own pool, initially consisting of 3 Fate Points.

The Storyteller may also decide to call for a refresh at any other appropriate moment during a game. If the session is filled with particularly difficult and dangerous Tests that are quickly pulling Fate Points away from characters then a refresh can be called to reflect the intensity of play. It's up to the Storyteller to gauge if a refresh is called for.

Players will usually be joyous when a refresh is offered to them, a cue to make the harried Storyteller a fresh cup of tea and offer a selection of choice biscuits. However, there is a price- for a refresh in the middle of a game session, the Storyteller also gains 5 Fate Points for her characters.

Rule

At a refresh, each character with less than their Refresh Rate has their total brought up to that number. At the start of a game session, the Storyteller has 3 Fate Points per other player to spend on his opposing characters. At a refresh called in the middle of a game session, the Storyteller also gains 5 Fate Points for her pool.

Being Compelled

The Storyteller can compel a player character, by requesting that they behave and act in a certain way that is suggested by one of their Aspects. This can happen during a Test, or at any other time during play. The Storyteller offers the player a Fate Point as an

incentive to go along with the suggested behaviour. The Fate Point token is wafted in front of the player being compelled, enticing them to accept. There might even be some persuasive taunting. The player can refuse, but doing this means he must give a Fate Point to the Storyteller.

In moments of high drama, the Storyteller might escalate, offering two or even three Fate Points to go along with a compel. It still costs the player just one Fate Point to ignore the compel.

Being compelled is a core and fun part of Age of Arthur. When Aspects are compelled, the character and the story can be moved in an unexpected direction, at an unexpected time, making the game more interesting. This provides a rich vein in which to accumulate Fate Points to be spent later. When a player is creating Aspects for their character they need to consider how they can be used by others to compel them and help to gather valuable Fate Points.

If a compel happens during a Test, it is resolved before any other actions take place in a particular turn of action, as it may determine what a character actually does!

Example

Brutus the Foolish encounters a giant in his travels. The giant begins boasting of his strength and violent exploits. Smirking, the Storyteller compels Brutus' Aspect *More Brawn than Brains*, to take the giant up on his challenge of a wrestling match, offering a Fate Point. Brutus, however, though foolish, is not quite that foolish and refuses the compel and the offer of a Fate Point, giving up one of his own.

Using Aspects to enliven play

Aspects say something important about a character. If a player plays out their character's Aspects in a way enlivens play then the Storyteller can choose to provide a Fate Point as a reward. The player may wish to explicitly signpost which Aspect they are calling on as they undertake a particular action or behaviour in the game. The table can decide the best convention for showcasing Aspects during play.

A Storyteller might also use one of a player character's Aspects in generating a story. For instance, suppose a player character has an Aspect *Mortal Enemies* with King Melwas. If King Melwas' agents show up in a story to cause trouble for the character, this is not a compel as such, as it does not suggest a particular course of action, but is using this Aspect, and so, nets the player a Fate Point.

Bringing sparkle to the table

If a player brings some sparkling play to the table, raises a laugh or induces a positive response from the group, then the Storyteller can reward the player by immediately giving them a Fate Point.

Spending Fate Points

Fate Points can be spent all too easily. Presented below are all the ways that you can spend them.

Bringing Aspects into play

Before the dice are rolled, spend a Fate Point to bring a relevant Aspect into play. This Aspect can be one of your own, or associated with the environment, a special piece of equipment, or even one of an opponent's. This gives you a +2 bonus to the total for this Test.

If a player wishes they can bring more than one Aspect into play on a Test. When multiple Aspects are brought into play, each cost one Fate Point and provides a cumulative +2 bonus. Each individual Aspect can only be use once for a specific Test.

Fate Points are most frequently spent in this way.

Re-rolling the dice

Pay a Fate Point to re-roll the dice any time that you are not happy with the result of your roll. Keep whichever of the two results you prefer. If the player still doesn't like the result then they can spend another Fate Point for a further re-roll, taking their preferred result from the three rolls and so on. All bonuses from the original roll still apply to any re-roll.

No Aspect is needed to spend a Fate Point on a re-roll.

Compelling Characters

Just as a player's character can be compelled (see above), they can also offer a compel to another player or Storyteller character. If the compel is accepted then this costs 1 Fate Point which is passed over to the player who accepts the compel.

Unlike Storyteller compels, player compels do not cost a Fate Point to refuse. A player compelling another player is a way to pass Fate Points around the table, with the condition of acting according to an Aspect.

Compelling NPCs

A player character can compel an NPC's Aspect to suggest a particular action. This works in the same way as compels against another player character. If the compel is accepted then this costs the player making it a Fate Point, which is passed to the Storyteller's character pool (see below).

Another way to use an NPC's Aspects, as mentioned above, is to get a +2 bonus to a relevant skill roll. This again costs a Fate Point, but the Fate Point does not go into the Storyteller's character pool.

Compelling the Story

If a player wants something to happen in the story, they can spend a Fate Point to take narrative control and make things happen. Appropriate changes include finding a useful object, meeting a friend (or enemy) and adding Aspects to a scene. The narration should be at least tangentially relevant to an Aspect that is already in play.

If the Storyteller agrees with the new content created by the player then they take the Fate Point and the player narration stays true. The Storyteller has the option to modify the narration, but in this case the Fate Point is returned to the player. If the rest of the table agrees that it's inappropriate, the narration can even be entirely vetoed, though this is not in general recommended.

Example

The player characters have split up in the course of an investigation. The druid, Drustan ap Bren, is by himself and has run into trouble with a gang of low lives threatening him with violence. Fortunately, his friend Brutus the Foolish has the Aspect *Always Ready for a Fight*. Either player could pay a Fate Point to have Brutus show up on the scene.

Free Aspects

Some Aspects can be brought into play without paying a Fate Point. These 'Free Aspects' are created by manoeuvres (see page 88) or as a result of Consequences being taken (see page 92). The first time that they are brought into play, either by the player that created them, or one of his allies, it provides a +2 bonus or a re-roll for no Fate Point cost. If the Aspect still exists in the scene after it is used, then subsequent uses of the Aspect costs a Fate Point as usual.

Storyteller Fate Points

The Storyteller also has a pool of Fate Points for her characters. This Fate Point pool is limited, starting at 3 Fate Points per player at the beginning of the session.

Unlike player characters, non-player characters (NPCs) have no Fate Points of their own. Any Fate Point expenditure for them comes from the Storyteller's store. The Storyteller only gets Fate Points back at the start of a session or a refresh, or when a player compels an NPC. She does not get them for compelling her own NPCs.

Fate Points given by the Storyteller to players for Compels, exciting roleplaying, and so on, are not paid from the Storyteller's pool, but are taken "from the infinite bag" as it were. Any Fate Points spent by players are put back into the bag. There is no direct exchange of Fate Points between the Storyteller's character pool and the players' stores.

Rule

The Extra Refresh stunt adds an extra Fate Point for a character at the start of the game and at each refresh. If the Storyteller has an NPC with the Extra Refresh stunt, she adds an extra Fate Point to her character Fate Point pool at the beginning of a scene where that NPC appears. Giving this stunt to an NPC is useful when the character has one or more stunts that require a Fate point to be spent when used.

Tests

During much of a game session there will be no need to look at rules or test the player characters' skills. The story will flow and events will be described between the storyteller and the players as the tale progresses. However, there will be moments when the players will wish to do something opposed by someone or something else. This will require the character to use the Age of Arthur game rules, their skills, Stunts and Aspects to succeed. At the heart of Age of Arthur are these very personal challenges faced by the player characters. These moments of uncertainty and tension are called 'Tests'. This and next few chapters will guide you through different types of Tests and how to resolve them.

The most basic type of Test is the Simple Test. Simple Tests form the basis for Contests, which use all the rules for simple Tests but then layer on some additional ideas to provide more 'game focus' to these crucial moments of conflict in play. Simple Tests are resolved with one roll of the dice, whereas Contests are generally resolved after several dice rolls.

Simple Tests

Most Tests in the game are likely to be simple Tests. They involve adding a relevant Skill and any other modifiers, such as from Aspects, to a roll of the dice. Remember, that every dice roll is 4dF, and generates a number from -4 to +4.

Players will be trying to match or exceed the difficulty number set by the Storyteller. If the Test involves two characters competing against each-other, then both roll the dice, and add their Skill number and any modifiers. Whoever has the higher total wins the Test.

Here are the basic steps.

1. Decide what the Test is about, the required skill and what happens if the player wins or loses. If the player doesn't have the necessary skill then they can still attempt the Test but at an effective Skill Level of 0.
2. If the Test is not a conflict between two characters then the Storyteller sets the difficulty number for the Test. The higher the number the more difficult the Test. The Test difficulty will typically be a number between 0 and 12. This is the number that the character has to reach to win.

As a quick guide here are some difficulties:

Difficulty	Description	Notes
0	Easy	You really should be able to manage this. Only an unlucky dice roll or lack of a relevant skill will hinder you.
2	Routine	Not too difficult, should be achievable.
4	Difficult	Some skill required and a reasonable dice roll too.
6	Challenging	Only highly skilled or very lucky characters will find these Tests stress-free.
8	Formidable	A high applicable skill level, good dice roll and some well-used Aspects will be needed.
10	Impossible	All of the above and more.
12	Very Impossible	It had better be worth it.

The player starts with their applicable Skill number and then modifies this with a roll of the dice. The outcome is described depending on whether or not they reach the difficulty set by the Storyteller. Reaching the number indicates success. Getting below the number indicates failure.

Basic Rule

In a simple Test, roll Skill + Dice roll against a difficulty number set by the Storyteller. If the result is greater than or equal to the difficulty number, the character succeeds in what they were attempting.

In a Test against another character, compare Skill + Dice roll, with the higher total winning.

The use of Aspects and Fate Points can modify the total rolled.

Example

Brutus the Foolish is trying to sneak past a guard to get into a fortress. He has a Stealth skill of 2. The guard has an Awareness skill of 1.

Brutus is unlucky. He rolls -1 on 4dF, for a total of $2-1=1$. The guard, on the other hand, rolls +2 on 4dF, for a total of $1+2=3$. The guard has the higher total and so beats Brutus, meaning the guard spots Brutus trying to sneak past.

Now let's make these simple Tests more interesting. A number of things can happen before the dice are rolled.

Being compelled

Another player or Storyteller can decide to compel one of the acting player's Aspects to influence how or whether the player undertakes the Test. If the player agrees to the compel then it is possible that the Test does not happen at all. It's also possible that the outcome of the Test is altered in some kind of way.

Supporting Skills

Sometimes a player will make a case for a second skill being useful to support the resolution of the Test. If the Storyteller agrees then one of the two skills is confirmed as the primary skill, the main one that will be tested, with the second skill is providing support. The second supporting skill ideally needs to be at an equal or higher level than the primary one. In this case it provides a +1 to the Test result.

If the supporting skill is lower than the tested skill, it might still be able to help. Roll 4dF and modify the supporting skill by the dice result. If this modified supporting skill is now at the same or higher level than the tested skill it provides +1 to the Test result. Otherwise the supporting skill adds no value. A further dice roll will be required for the main Test.

Example

Lancelot has a Melee Combat skill of 4 and a Riding skill of 5. When fighting from horseback in close combat, the Riding skill supports Melee Combat, meaning Lancelot's Melee Combat skill has a +1 bonus in that situation, raising it to 5.

Using Aspects

Before the dice are rolled a player can bring into play one or more Aspects. Aspects used should be relevant to the Test. They cost one Fate Point each to bring into play and each provide +2 to the player's result. See page 76 for the different types of Aspect.

Example

Drustan ap Bren is using his Investigation skill of 4 to look through Roman records for information about a Temple to Mithras in Londinium, where there are hints that The Cauldron of Dirnach is hidden. The Storyteller announces that finding the needed information has a difficulty number of 6.

Drustan's player pays a Fate Point and uses the Aspect Thirst for Knowledge to gain a +2 bonus. Rolling 4dF, Drustan has a result of 0, for a final total of $4+2+0=6$. Drustan succeeds in his researches, albeit barely.

Re-roll the dice

As described in the Fate Point section on page 78, a player can spend a Fate Point and re-roll the dice, taking the preferred result.

Degree of Success

How well a player character does in a Test is measured by how high their total is compared to the Test difficulty or an opponent's total. The difference in these numbers is termed the Degree of Success. If the character only just matches the difficulty (Degree of Success of 0), then they have just barely succeeded. Higher Degrees of Success indicate a more notable victory. A Degree of Success of 3 or higher is known as a 'critical' result, which is a very good thing.

- 0: barely a success, just scraped through, the outcome is positive but possibly with a complication
- 1: a solid success with the winning outcome going your way
- 2: a great success with the outcome even better than expected
- 3 or more: a critical success creating a positive game based reward called 'Spin', in addition to a great outcome

If time is being measured using the time track, then the Degree of Success may shorten the time the Test takes (see page 89).

Example

Drustan ap Bren encounters a Fae monster. He wants to identify it. The Storyteller determines that this needs a Lore [Fae] simple Test against difficulty 2 (routine). Further, if he gets a critical result- a Degree of Success of 3 or more- then Bren will learn one of the monster's weaknesses.

Drustan has a Lore [Fae] skill of 2. Drustan's player rolls +2 on 4DF, for a final result of 4. This number is high enough to match the difficulty of 2. Drustan learns that the Fae monster is a troll. However, the Degree of Success is less than 3, so Drustan fails to learn of the creature's aversion to salt.

Spin

If a character gets a critical result, a Degree of Success of 3 or more, on a Test then, in certain circumstances, they create Spin. Spin provides a bonus +1 to the character's next dice roll. Usually, Spin only applies when there is no other benefit from such a high Degree of Success.

Putting it all together

Here is the full sequence for simple Tests:

- Describe the Test, the outcomes and the skills to be used
- Set the difficulty
- Declare and resolve compelled Aspects
- Check if any supporting skills are applicable
- Consider using any available Aspects to help if required
- Roll the dice, add the appropriate skill, add any bonuses due to Aspects - this is the player's Test result
- Compare against the Test difficulty or the opponents result. If equal to or higher than the difficulty then the player succeeds at the Test
- Consider a re-roll of the dice by spending a Fate Point
- Determine the Degree of Success and describe the outcome

Often a simple Test will only involve a skill number and a roll of the dice. All the options above are always available if needed.

Manoeuvres

A Manoeuvre is a character action that can create a temporary Aspect on the scene, another character or even themselves. The Aspect can then be brought into play like any other. The first time it is brought into play by the character or an ally doesn't cost any Fate Points, it's free. After that, each use of the Aspect costs a Fate Point as usual. A manoeuvre-created Aspect normally lasts for the rest of the scene, but some vanish after one use, depending on the narrative. If there is any doubt, the Storyteller decides how long a manoeuvre-created Aspect is available.

Manoeuvres also provide a way for a character to help another in a skill Test.

There are two manoeuvre types:

Simple action manoeuvre

To perform a simple action, the player simply describes what their character is doing and makes a relevant Skill Test at difficulty 2. The effect of the action is applied if the Test is successful. Any Aspect created in this way is written down and available for use.

Example

Brutus the Foolish takes aim with his hand axe and tracks the Saxon as he staggers towards the maiden.

An Awareness skill Test is made at difficulty 2. If the Test is successful, the Aspect *Take aim!* is created.

Contested manoeuvres

A contested manoeuvre is usually targeted at another character. For the manoeuvre to succeed a Test needs to be won against the target. A Degree of Success of 0 (a tie) is enough for a contested manoeuvre to succeed.

Example

Brin ap Mor throws dust in the Saxon warrior's face, confusing him for a moment so that the next blow cuts through his defences.

Brin makes an Agility Test against the Saxon's Awareness skill. If Brin succeeds, the Saxon gets a new temporary Aspect, *aagh I cannot see!*

Assisting another character

A character can aid another in a Test by making a relevant skill Test at difficulty 2. If this Test works, then the one being aided has a +2 bonus to their Test.

This is a special case of a manoeuvre. The assistant makes a skill Test to place a temporary Aspect, and the one performing the main Test then invokes it at no Fate Point cost for the bonus. It is a short cut in that we do not worry explicitly about describing the Aspect placed by the manoeuvre.

The Time Track

Sometimes a Test will have both a difficulty and a duration to complete. As an option, higher degrees of success will reduce the time needed to complete the Test.

In this case, the time needed to perform the task is reduced by one step on the time track per Degree of Success, up to a maximum of four steps.

The Time Track

Instant
A few seconds
Half a minute
A minute
A few minutes
15 minutes
Half an hour
An hour
A few hours
A day
A few days
A week
A few weeks
A month
A few months
A season
Half a year
A year
A few years
A decade
A lifetime

Example

Junius Belarus is supervising the repairs to a Roman fortification. He has a Profession (Engineer) skill of 3 and the task is at difficulty 2. The time needed is a month, but better results can reduce the time needed according to the time track.

Junius rolls -1 on 4dF, for a result of 2. The task succeeds in the stated time.

On the other hand, suppose that Bren ap Mor, with his Leadership skill of 4, used it to make a manoeuvre, placing the Aspect *Motivated Workforce* on those performing the actual labour needed for the repairs. Then Junius could use this Aspect for a +2 bonus (at no Fate Point cost) and gain a result of 4. This is a Degree of Success of 2, reducing the time needed by two levels on the time track. All that is needed is a week.

A truly remarkable roll and use of Aspects might even have reduced the time needed to as little as day. Evidently, in this case, the damage was not as extreme as it appeared.

The time needed to perform the repairs could be important if, for instance, it was known that the Saxons were on the march and due to attack in just over a week.



30/11/16

Chapter 6- Endurance Tests and Contests

Damage

Stress and Consequences

Stress Scores

During social, psychological and physical conflict there is a danger that characters will get damaged. This damage is measured on the two stress scores: Health and Composure. During a conflict, two opposing characters will make a Test and one will win. The Degree of Success of the victor is the damage inflicted on the opponent, modified by armour and weapons in the case of combat.

This damage is the number the stress score is reduced by. Stress loss represents very minor injuries and setbacks from which characters can quickly recover. However, if you run out of stress your character has been knocked out of a conflict. In some situations, such as combat, this could be fatal!

To prevent an early exit from a conflict, your character can absorb some damage by taking a Consequence. Some rules (such as breaking an oath) could temporarily change this.

Consequences

Consequences represent more lasting and significant harm to the character. When a character has been damaged by an attack, before subtracting the damage from the stress score, you may reduce the Degree of Success by applying a Consequence. A mild Consequence reduces the number of damage levels by two, a moderate Consequence reduces the number of levels by four, and a severe Consequence reduces the number of levels by six.

Consequence Type	Damage Reduction
Mild	2
Moderate	4
Severe	6

After reducing the damage by Consequences, any remaining damage is deducted from the relevant stress score. A character may normally only have one Mild, one Moderate and one Severe Consequences, regardless of the track the Consequence was scored against.

A character may only take one Consequence at a time as a result of a single instance of damage. So, if a character suffers 12 levels of damage as a result of single blow, it cannot be reduced to zero by taking a mild, a moderate and a severe Consequence at the same time. At best it can only be reduced to 6 by taking a severe Consequence. In this example the character is likely to be knocked out anyway!

The defender determines the precise wording of the Consequence (subject to reasonableness, as agreed by the table). The Consequence is an extra Aspect that can be invoked and compelled as usual. The first time a Consequence is invoked by an opponent, there is no fate point cost.

Examples of Consequences

Mild:	(Health)	Broken Weapon, Nauseated, Ruined Clothing, Sprained Ankle, Winded
	(Composure)	Confused, Embarrassed, Headache, Needs a Drink, Shaken
Moderate:	(Health)	Broken Nose, Burned, Exhausted, Sickened, Gaping Wound
	(Composure)	Crisis of Confidence, Depressed, Nervous Stammer, Shamed, Terrified
Severe:	(Health)	Broken Limb, Bleeding to Death, Internal Injuries, Gruesome Wound
	(Composure)	Cannot Face the World, Humiliated, Hysterical, Mental Breakdown

Being Knocked Out

A character is out of play when he sustains a hit that reduces any stress score to zero. Consequences can keep the amount of damage down. So, for example, a person that takes eight levels of damage more than his Health stress score in combat cannot be saved. That's a one-strike kill... or maybe there's a better way to narrate it?

The attacker narrates taking out his opponent (subject to reasonableness, as determined by the table). Anything that suits the method (sword attacks, punching, whatever) and that genuinely removes the character from play is suitable. If the Contest was a wild melee then your character might be unconscious, dead or maimed. If the Contest is a social conflict then you might be ostracised and friendless.

When narrating how an opponent is Taken Out, it is essential to articulate how and if the opponent can return to the game. This gives a lot of power to the victor and should be an incentive to players to offer concessions when things aren't going their way.

Concessions

A player who thinks their character is going to lose a Contest can seek to exit early by offering a Concession. The concession explains how the character escapes from the Test and the complication they must endure to do so. It's a great way for villains to escape to return in a later game session.

Both players and the Storyteller can offer a Concession. However, there are limitations. Firstly, A Concession must be offered before the dice are rolled and damage is applied. It is too late to offer a Concession after a bad dice roll that would take a character out! Also, the opposition in a Test is not required to accept a Concession and can instead opt to fight on.

Healing

Recovering Stress Loss

Stress loss is not real damage. They are the sweats, panic, scratches, "only a flesh wound," and so on: nothing that actually affects performance or can't be fixed with a tiny amount of downtime. All Health and Composure stress damage is erased after an opportunity for the character to have some safe downtime. The table should rule when enough time has passed or whether the downtime was sufficiently relaxing. It could be a welcoming homestead with no one fighting in it, or the uneventful three days' travel time to the next destination, or even just a quiet moment to reflect and pull yourself together.

Recovering Consequences

Characters cannot begin removing Consequences until the associated stress score has been restored. Consequences can be naturally healed over time. Once this time is passed the Consequence can be removed. The healing process can be speeded up by skilled healers who know the right treatments, herbs and restorative experiences to bring mind and body back together. Magic can bring immediate restoration, but sometimes at a cost.

Natural Healing

- A Mild Consequence is cleared within one game day, or at the end of the session, whichever is sooner.
- A Moderate Consequence remains for a game week or until the end of the following session, whichever is sooner.
- A Severe Consequence remains for a game month or must be carried through two complete sessions in which the associated stress score is never damaged, whichever

is sooner. If it is incurred during session one, it is gone no sooner than the end of session three. If the associated stress score takes hit in a fight during that session, you'll need to hold the Consequence through yet another one.

Healers

Healers can improve the time it takes to recover stress and remove Consequences. Health stress can be healed with the healing skill and minimal equipment, such as improvised bandages. The difficulty of the Healing Test is the amount of damage to Health. The Degree of Success is the amount of Health stress restored. Such healing can even be used during a contest or combat, where it counts as the healer's action for a turn.

If a character has no stress damage, an attempt can be made to heal Consequences.

- A Mild Consequence can be treated by a healer after the situation (for example, a combat) in which the wound was sustained is over. It requires dressings, salves or other herbs. If the healer can make a successful Test against difficulty 2 then the time to remove the Consequence is reduced according to the time track on page 89, starting at a day.
- A Moderate Consequence remains until a healer can make a successful Test against difficulty 4. Success reduces the healing time, again, according to the time track starting at a week. The healing requires a dedicated quiet place where the person can be attended to. The location may have Aspects that can be used.
- A Severe Consequence can be healed by a healer rolling against difficulty 6. It requires a recognised place of healing such as would be found in an abbey, hospital or sacred grove. Location Aspects, if any, may again be used. Success reduces the healing time as expected on the time track starting at 'a few months'. In only the most exceptional case should the impact of the severe Consequence be removed before the end of the session following the one in which it was received.

A failed Healing Test cannot be attempted again, unless a Fate point is spent to do so, or circumstances change for the better.

Endurance Tests

An Endurance Test is a simple Test where, if a character fails, he or she suffers a point of damage per level of failure. For a physical Test, damage reduces the Health stress score. For a mental Test, damage reduces the Composure stress score. Consequences may be taken as usual to alleviate this damage, though such may, as usual, be long-term effects.

Endurance Tests are often more difficult than ordinary simple Tests. If such a Test is taken at all there is a good chance that a character will suffer at least a small amount of damage, unless a character has exceptional skills or uses relevant Aspects.

Rule

The difficulty of an Endurance Test is the difficulty of a Test to come through it without taking any damage whatsoever, however minor.

Stress loss from an endurance Test does not vanish until the situation that caused the Test is over. So, for instance, damage due to a long journey or lack of food will not go away until a character has rested or eaten. Damage from a disease will not go away until the disease has been cured or run its course.

Physical endurance Tests are more common than mental ones, but both sorts are possible. They are useful tools for the table to resolve certain situations.

Example

Brutus the Foolish, fleeing a group of Jute warriors on a beach in Kent decides to escape by swimming to Gaul. No, really. This is an all but impossible task, requiring a Strength-based endurance Test at difficulty 12. The difficulty to get through this without any damage is the highest possible.

The Storyteller informs Brutus' player of these odds. However, Brutus is desperate and persists. He has a Strength skill of 4 and pays a Fate Point to use his Aspect *More Brawn than Brains* for a +2 bonus to his skill level.

The player rolls a -1 on the four Fudge dice, for a final result of $4+2-1=5$, that is a failure by 7. Brutus has 5 unchecked Health boxes, so the damage is enough to take him out (which would be fatal in this case). However, Brutus decides to reduce the damage by 4, to a manageable 3 points, by taking a Moderate Consequence of Half-Drowned. He reaches Gaul, albeit in a severely weakened state.

Poison and Disease

Poisons and diseases are modelled by Strength-based endurance Tests. For a typical poison or disease, the difficulty of the Test is 4. As usual, a point of physical stress damage is suffered by the victim per level of failure. Someone with the Plant and Root magical skill and the Stunt Brew Poisons can easily make poisons; see page 58. In this case, the difficulty of the Test to withstand the poison is the level of the Plant and Root skill Test.

This damage is not applied immediately. It takes a few minutes to take effect with poison, and a few days to take effect with disease. In particular, note that the utility of poisons within combat is limited.

However, damage from a poison or disease may not be healed for as long as the poison or disease is in the victim's system: a few days for a poison, or a month for a disease. A Healing Test at difficulty 0 can be made to reduce this time according to the time track on page 89.

As is the case with any form of Healing Test, a failed Test cannot be attempted again, unless a Fate point is spent to do so, or circumstances change for the better.

Travel

Normally travel is a fairly routine event, requiring at most a Survival-based Endurance Test at a final difficulty of 2, even when travelling for several days over long distances. Usually, no Test is required.

A Roman mile is a thousand paces (where each pace is two steps) and is estimated to be 1,479 meters. By road, a traveller on foot moving at such a pace can cover about 27 Roman miles (40km) per full day. This distance is reduced to 14 miles (20km) per day if going overland, and to 7 miles per day (10km) if moving through harsh terrain, such as mountains.

All this assumes that travel is at a relatively leisurely pace, with adequate rests and provisions. If there is a lack of rest then the journey endurance Test difficulty is increased by +2.

If a traveller wishes to move more quickly, there is always the option of a forced march, which increases the daily travel distances by 50%, but means an endurance Test is needed at difficulty 2 on the first day, with +2 to difficulty for each day afterwards.

Another way to increase travel times is to ride rather than walk. On roads, or over flat terrain, daily travel distances are increased by 50%. It is also possible to attempt a forced march when riding. In this case, the horse must make a Strength-based endurance Test. The character's Riding skill can be used to support the horse. A typical horse's Strength skill is 4, but horses will not take Consequences, instead an overused horse will drop from exhaustion.

Armies and Travel

Armies always move more slowly than one might expect, given the speeds of individuals within them. All of the above travel distances are halved when a large force travels together.

Extreme weather conditions, such as heat, cold and storms, can also make it hard to travel. A Survival-based endurance Test is required at difficulty 4 for each day of journeying in such conditions. Travel distances are halved. A lack of suitable clothing for the conditions adds a further +2 to the difficulty.

The final complicating factor to consider is lack of provisions. Lacking provisions is not necessarily a disaster, as it is possible to forage and even hunt on a journey, but nonetheless a lack of provisions adds a further +2 to any difficulties in the endurance Test. In this case Tests are needed every day, even for a routine journey.

These difficulties are summarised in the following table.

Travel Situation	Difficulty of Endurance Test
Routine	2
Forced March	+2 per day after first
No Rest	+2
Extreme Weather Conditions	4
Lack of Suitable Clothing	+2
Lack of Provisions	+2

Contests

Contests can be used for everything from chases and wrestling matches to board games and debates. They are used when the table does not want to resolve a Test in a single dice roll. The spotlight is on this 'contest', because the stakes are too high, it's too interesting, or there is the possibility of long-lasting Consequences.

The Set-Up

The first step in a Contest is for the table to decide whether the Contest is physical or mental, which skills can be used and the effects of winning or losing.

The first of these is usually obvious. A chase and a wrestling match are examples of physical contests, though the latter can also be handled by the personal combat rules for a little more detail. A debate and a game of latrunculi (a Roman board game) are examples of mental contests. The difference between these two forms of contest is that physical contests use the Health stress scores of participants, whereas mental contests use the Composure stress scores.

Which skills are allowable in a contest is usually obvious, though some skill uses may be less obvious, and need the agreement of the table. For example, in a chase, the Agility and Strength skills are both relevant. There are also situations where other skills, such as Stealth could be used. In a wrestling bout, the key skills are likely to be Agility, Brawling and Strength. A debate is more free-ranging, with all social skills being suitable if their use is described to the satisfaction of the table. On the other hand, Gaming is perhaps the only appropriate skill to use for a fair game of latrunculi.

The effects of winning and losing a contest will sometimes be clear. For a wrestling match or *latrunculi* game, the winner wins and the loser loses, though it is possible there are other things invested in the outcome. Indeed, this is likely if the more detailed contest rules are used rather than a single opposed skill Test. For a chase, the outcome decides whether the one being pursued is caught or gets away.

On the other hand, the effects of winning or losing a debate are often less clear. Perhaps a 'neutral' judge is won over to a particular point of view. Perhaps the opinions of a crowd are swayed. The outcome depends on the situation and what is decided by the table. In any case, the effects of winning and losing are best chosen before the contest begins.

Resolution

A contest is divided into a series of turns. The length of the turn depends on the contest. It might be a few seconds long in a wrestling match, or a few minutes long in a chase, debate, or *latrunculi* game. Even longer turns are possible in some forms of contest, for example a pursuit between ships, or a race across the wilderness to reach a particular destination. In any case, the rules are the same, though with very long turns. A contest may well be interrupted temporarily or permanently by other events.

The simplest form of contest has just two participants. In this case, each turn, both participants make a relevant skill Test. Fate Points can be spent as usual. The winner of this Test inflicts damage on the loser, either to the Health or Composure stress score, depending on whether the contest is physical or mental, equal to the amount he or she has won by.

When one participant is reduced to zero stress, they have lost the contest. The other participant has won.

As usual, all Health and Composure damage is erased after an opportunity to have some safe downtime. There are no long-term effects from this damage alone beyond that of losing the Contest, which may be unpleasant.

Manoeuvres

A character involved in a Contest can also make a manoeuvre instead of an ordinary Test in a turn of a Contest, as described in the previous chapter. A manoeuvre in a contest is often also an opposed skill Test. This Test does not have to involve one of the normally allowed skills in a contest if appropriately described. For example, Deception can always be used to trick an opponent, or Awareness to spot something new.

If a character attempting the manoeuvre loses the opposed Test, he or she takes damage as usual. If the Test is drawn or won, the character gets to place an appropriate Aspect on them reflecting what happened, rather than inflicting damage.

As usual for a manoeuvre, this new Aspect can be used once at no Fate Point cost for a +2 bonus to a skill Test in the contest. The Manoeuvre can be brought into play by the character that placed it or one of his allies. Manoeuvres are one way for characters

without the usual skills to compete in contests. They are especially effective when groups of allies are involved (see below).

Consequences

Taking Consequences in a contest can stave off the inevitable, perhaps giving a chance to turn things around at a cost. It is not necessary or desirable to suffer Consequences to avoid losing every single contest encountered. We say more about this in the Storyteller Advice chapter.

Most friendly or non-lethal contests usually end with nothing more than a Mild Consequence. However, someone particularly determined might choose to take a Moderate or Severe Consequence, such as a broken arm in a wrestling match. The contest can continue after this point but that is an indication that it is turning serious and is no longer just a game.

Larger Contests

In some contests, for example a race, there will be more than two participants competing against each other. In this case, everyone involved makes a skill Test each turn. The one with the lowest result suffers stress damage equal to the difference between their result and the highest one.

A participant reduced to zero stress drops out of the contest. Sometimes this will end a contest as a 'loser' has been found. Sometimes the contest will continue with fewer people involved until a winner is decided when everyone else has dropped out.

The effects of dropping out may vary. Consider, for instance a chase between a number of pursuers and a number of people attempting to escape. Those who would escape get away if every pursuer drops out of the contest, or the pursuers give up, having lost too many people. On the other hand, as soon as one person running away drops out, they are caught by the remaining pursuers. It is up to their fellows whether to continue running, or to choose to drop out to keep their comrade company, perhaps turning the chase into a personal combat.

Teams

Sometimes, a group of those involved in a contest will act together as a team. In this case, everyone in the team rolls as above, but only the best result counts. When a team loses a turn of a contest, the participant with the lowest result suffers the damage inflicted. If any team member drops to zero stress, the team as a whole loses the contest.

For a group of NPCs with identical skill levels, where nobody particularly stands out, the Storyteller should save time by just rolling once for the entire group, at the skill level of an individual member.

Examples of Play

A Debate

The bard Velua ferch Cartivel is seeking to convince King Einion of Ebrauc to accept Arthur as High King. Velua is a persuasive woman, with a Charm skill of 4 and a Performance skill of 5. She has a Composure stress score of 3. Velua also has an oath to see Arthur declared High King of all Britain.

On the other hand, King Einion can resist with a Willpower skill of 4 and a Leadership skill of 3. He has a Composure stress score of 4.

Turn 1

Velua begins with a manoeuvre, singing a song of praise to Arthur's great victories in war, using the Performance skill. Einion, on the other hand, tries to be unmoved with the Willpower skill. Neither uses any Fate Points.

Velua gains a result of 6 and Einion gains a result of 5. Since Velua's action was a manoeuvre, Einion's Composure is not affected, but she uses her success to put the Aspect *Arthur is a Great War Leader* on the scene. This Aspect can be used once for no Fate Point cost.

Turn 2

Velua uses her Charm this time around, bringing into play the free Aspect *Arthur is a Great War Leader*, for a +2 bonus. Einion argues back that he is an independent king and rightful king of Northern Britain and will not answer to the bastard nephew of the old High King. He uses his Leadership skill to do this and spends two Fate Points to bring the Aspects *Stubborn Old Man*, and *Line of the Kings of Northern Britain* into play to do this.

Velua rolls quite poorly, getting a result of 4. Einion has a result of 8. This inflicts $8-4=4$ points of Composure damage on the bard. Velua decides to take a Minor Consequence, *Impressed Despite Herself with King Einion*, to negate two points of damage and stay in the contest.

Turn 3

This time, Velua spends two Fate Points, using her oath to see Arthur as High King and bring the Aspect *Arthur is a Great War Leader* into play, pointing out that Britain can best defend itself from the Angle and Saxon threat if it is united and that Arthur is the best man to defend it. Einion continues to argue that he has just as much right to be high king, at least of the north. This time he does not spend any Fate Points, but uses Velua's new Consequence for free, at no Fate Point cost, for a +2 bonus.

Velua uses Charm and, along with the Fate Points spent on Aspects, finally has a good roll, obtaining a result of 10. Einion gains a result of 4, meaning he suffers $10-4=6$ points of Composure damage. The king will have to take at least a moderate Consequence

himself, not to admit that Velua has the right of things and that it would make sense for him to swear fealty to Arthur as High King.

A Chase

Brin ap Mor, and Brutus the Foolish are fleeing a group of five pursuing Fae wolves through an overgrown forest. The chase is resolved as a physical contest, with the relevant skills being Agility, Strength and Survival. If a participant in the chase is reduced to zero Health, this does not necessarily mean the race is over, but does mean they drop out of it, with the associated effects.

The best relevant skill for Brin is Survival 3. The best relevant skill for Brutus is his Strength skill of 4. Finally, the Fae wolves all have Agility skills of 4. The race is on!

Turn 1

All participants make a skill Test. Nobody spends any Fate Points or attempts manoeuvres.

Brutus gains a result of 4 and Brin a result of 2. The Storyteller rolls for the Fae wolves as a group, gaining a result of 5. Brin suffers $5-2=3$ levels of damage to Health, leaving him only one unchecked box. The race continues, but Brin could be in trouble.

Turn 2

This turn, Brin uses his Aspect *Man of the Woods* for a +2 bonus to the roll. The Story Teller decides not to spend any Fate Points on the Fae wolves. This time, Brin rolls well, gaining a result of 7, including the +2 bonus. Brutus gets a result of 5 and the Story Teller rolls poorly for the Fae wolves, getting a result of 2.

A total of $7 - 2 = 5$ points of damage to the wolves means that one of them has their Health score reduced to zero and drops out of the chase. Four, however, remain and, as mentioned at the start, the Fae wolves continue despite their numbers being one less. In other contests, having one person from a team drop out might end the entire Contest.

Turn 3

This time, Brin and Brutus do not spend any Fate Points. The Story Teller, however, uses the wolves' *Relentless Pursuit* Aspect and spends a Fate Point to give them a +2 bonus.

When it is time to roll, Brutus gets a result of 3 and the wolves get a result of 4. Brin, unfortunately, gets a result of 2, meaning he suffers $4 - 2 = 2$ further points of Health damage, enough to take him to zero. He elects not to mitigate this damage by taking a Consequence and so drops out of the conflict.

The four remaining wolves have caught Brin! His companion Brutus could now escape, or stop to help his comrade fight the four Fae wolves. Still, at least Brin's Health stress is restored as the contest has ended. Another conflict is about to begin!



Chapter 7 - Mortal Combat

In the dark and dangerous world in the Age of Arthur there are many forces that will strive to kill your character. This chapter builds on the Tests chapter providing you with some more options to detail what happens when player characters face mortal danger. When detailing a combat in Age of Arthur the table can choose how the flow of activity is represented in play. You have two options:

- Abstract – the flow of the combat is simply described and relative distances and movement are quickly arbitrated by the Storyteller. This approach works best for uncomplicated combats between a small number of opponents or if you are happy to keep everything in the imagination and not get tactical.
- Mapped – the flow of combat is represented by a drawn map and some sort of token to represent each player character or group of characters moving together. These tokens could be simple counters through to detailed miniatures. This approach works best for more detailed combats, with lots of protagonists and where you want to factor in the impact of terrain and movement.

Using a Map

When representing the action of a combat a quickly drawn map can add a new dimension to the action. The area can be swiftly drawn on plain paper as the map is not meant to be an accurate cartographic representation, but rather a sketch of the terrain. The map is laid out in *zones*, abstract divisions of space in which significant terrain types are identified. Player character movement between zones may have some action cost associated with it (doors, etc.) or not, using a mechanism referred to as a border. Range is somewhat abstracted by being measured in numbers of zones. Here are some general pointers.

If the map is of outside terrain then:

- Characters in the same zone are in hand-to-hand combat range. They can punch, grapple and stab each-other with ease.
- Characters in different zones can only attack each-other with missile weapons. The maximum separation between attacker and defender depends on the range of the missile weapon. Short range is 2 zones, medium range is 3 zones, and long range is 4 zones.

If map is of a building such as a villa, tomb or temple then:

- Characters in adjacent zones can be poked with spears with some effort, being one or two passus (Roman pace, about 1.5 metres) distant.
- Characters further distant can be attacked with missile weapons, depending on the nature of the map and any barriers (see below).

Buildings and tombs will typically be represented as floor plans providing more detailed and precise measurements and built over a number of levels. This can be abstracted so that a whole level or group of rooms can be given an Aspect to describe them.

Examples of such Aspects include the following.

- Cluttered: a cluttered level is full of things that block line of sight and make movement difficult. It can still be huge (two, three, four, even five zones), but the clutter means that weapons cannot be used beyond range zero.
- Complicated: a complicated level is such that it is impossible to acquire line of sight past an adjacent zone. The maximum range characters can engage in is one zone regardless of the number of zones in the level.
- Open: an open area has no interesting obstructions and characters can engage at any range.

When using such a floor plan map, it is not necessary to represent literally the features of the interior.

As with the overhead map, borders are given numeric values for the Degree of Success needed to cross.

Zones

Zones are deliberately abstract and involve some bending of space. Maps for a good Age of Arthur fight should be kept simple. Lay a piece of paper over the playing area and then sketch the map. When a few terrain elements have been laid down, it should become obvious how to divide it into zones and apply zone Aspects and pass values for borders.

Avoid laying out a grid. The zone system rewards a layout based on the significance of the terrain rather than its precise measurement. Zones should not only represent strict distances but also represent the relationships between space and ease of travel and view. Wide open spaces can be big, for example, while rooms in a villa can be much smaller, becoming zones with their walls as boundaries. A long straight corridor can reasonably be a single zone if it is narrow enough that you couldn't swing a sword in it.

Some general rules for zones inside structures include:

- Rooms with doors that close are a zone, no matter how small.
- Split big zones up simply because the range is long (if the space is big enough to swing a sword like in a church).

Overall, try to keep the basic rules for zone ranges: same zone is melee, adjacent zone is spear range if indoors, two zones away is throwing and three or four is firing missile weapons. More than four zones is enough to credibly claim you can escape.

If a zone has an Aspect (and this is a great way to model terrain effects), just write the Aspect right on the zone.

Borders can have pass values. Any border between zones that is especially difficult to cross will have a pass value, which is the Degree of Success (from a successful move action – see below) needed to pass through the border. Basic doors might have a pass value of 1 or 2. Iron bound treasure room doors might have a much higher pass value; perhaps 4 or higher. A pass value may become zero, when the door is opened. Once the door is closed it regains its pass value.

Examples of Pass Values

A heavy iron door	(hard to open, stays open, hard to close)	4/0/4
A barrier of burning logs	(hard to clear, stays cleared)	8/0/X

The situation is slightly different for outdoor locations, where too many zones clutter the map.

Rule

Outdoors, all brawling and close combat weapons have a range of 0 (combatants must be in the same zone). Ranged weapons have their usual maximum range in zones.

Overhead Maps

An overhead map may have several zones. A region that is hard to pass may be split into more zones. Visual cues on a map can be used exactly as a worded Aspect. There may be zones without Aspects. These are areas that don't offer tactical options.

Managing Combat

This section provides all the rules to manage combats and make use of those absorbing maps that you may have sketched out.

The Sequence

Combat occurs according to a strict sequence of events. In order to run the Sequence, one player should be named the caller (usually the Storyteller, but if one player's character is not physically present in the combat scene, it makes sense for him to call, while the Storyteller controls the opposition). The duty of the caller is to run the Sequence: he ensures that each phase is given sufficient time and that there is a smooth pace as phases proceed.

Taking Turns

Characters take turns to act in order of Awareness skill, with ties broken by Agility. If the narrative of the combat suggests another order then the Storyteller can go with what makes sense of the developing situation. If you want to keep things very simple then poll players alternately clockwise and anticlockwise around the table. When going anticlockwise start with the Storyteller characters.

Combat is organized into turns of non-specific length, but each representing something between ten seconds and a minute, depending on the actions described. Consequently, it may be assumed that more is happening within each turn than is actually being described.

- Each player's turn consists of a "free" one-zone move and an action.
- The "free" move may be used to reduce a pass value by one.

Characters are able to undertake one action when it comes to their turn. The main action will fall into one of five categories: *move*, *attack*, *manoeuvre*, or *do something else*.

Move

Any combat action allows a character to move a single zone. If, however, the player declares his whole action to be a move, he may roll Agility against a difficulty of 2. The Degree of Success is the number of extra moves available, up to a maximum of two additional zones and for passing any barriers between the zones.

A character may move no more than three zones in a single turn, including the free move. Excess levels can be used to reduce additional pass values, though.

Borders with a multiple move cost to pass through (like a closed door or difficult terrain) can be moved through with one turns' expenditure (if it's sufficient) or by continued movement over multiple turns. So, for example, when trying to move through a closed door with a pass value of 2, a player adjacent to it could reduce it by 1, with his free move, and still make a combat action or forfeit his combat action and make an Agility roll to attempt to move further. Any Degree of Success may be brought to bear on border obstacles as long as the three zone movement limit is maintained.

Attack

If a player declares an attack action, he selects the skill he will use to attack. This will normally be Brawling, Melee Combat or Missile Combat but could be something else if he has an appropriate Stunt. He then considers if any Aspects are to be brought into play. As usual, each Aspect costs 1 Fate Point and provides a bonus of +2.

Dice are now rolled and modified by the Skill and Aspect bonuses to find the total Test score. The defender then picks a skill to defend with. Brawling or Melee Combat can be used to defend in hand to hand combat. Agility can be used to defend in either hand to hand or ranged combat. Melee Combat can also defend against ranged attacks if the defender has a shield. Defensive skills from Stunts can also be used if appropriate. It is permitted to use the same skill for both attack and defence. As with attacks, once a skill has been chosen, the defender considers if Aspects should be brought into play, and then the dice are rolled.

Rule

First the attacker picks a skill and selects any Aspects. Then dice are rolled to generate a total. A Fate point can be spent now for the attacker to re-roll if desired.

Then, in response to the attacker's total, the defender picks a skill and selects any Aspects before rolling the dice. A Fate point can be spent for the defender to re-roll if desired.

The difference between the attacker's roll and the defender's roll after all modifications is the Degree of Success, as in any opposed Test. If the Degree of Success is zero or positive, the attack was successful. If negative the attack fails. If the result is -3 or lower, the defender gets spin to be used later.

Damage is now calculated. Add damage values from weapons, or other sources, to the Degree of Success. Subtract any absorption values from armour or other sources. If the total is zero or less then no damage is inflicted. See the weapon and armour tables to find the damage and absorption values for weapons and armour

For each successful attack, damage is subtracted from the Health stress score. If a Consequence is used to mitigate damage, it is immediately available as an Aspect to opponents and can be used once by an opponent with no Fate Point cost.

If a successful attack does no damage due to armour or other factors, then the attacker gets to place a free temporary Aspect on the defender instead. This temporary Aspect is similar to one placed by a manoeuvre (see below), and can be used once for free by the attacker or his allies for no Fate Point cost.

Rule

A character may be attacked by multiple opponents. The defender is able to defend against all the attacks made against him at no penalty. The multiple attackers may choose to use manoeuvres to create Aspects that their fellow attackers can use.

Each defence is a separate roll with the option of Aspects and re-rolls as usual.

Composure Attack

A Composure attack is conducted to unnerve, goad, taunt, intimidate, distract and generally destroy the will of the opponent. Damage is done to the Composure stress score only. Characters attack using persuasion or intimidation abilities and they are opposed by Willpower or other abilities that make sense to the table.

Manoeuvre

A player may wish to place an Aspect on a zone or a character. This can represent anything from distracting an opponent by throwing dirt in their face, flanking and positioning, to changing the environment of the conflict. This is a manoeuvre, as described in chapter 5.

Before the manoeuvre, the player may choose to move his character one zone. To summarise the rules again, the manoeuvring player makes an appropriate Test against either a target difficulty of 2, or an appropriate Skill that the opponent is using to defend, depending on the situation. If the roll is successful he places the Aspect. Manoeuvre rolls can be modified by Aspects, spin and so forth just as any other roll.

An Aspect placed by a manoeuvre can be used once by the one who placed it or an ally at no Fate Point cost. Subsequent uses of the Aspect cost a Fate Point as usual. The Storyteller should determine whether the Aspect placed is lasting or transient.

Lasting Aspects are Aspects that affect the person or terrain directly for the duration of the conflict or scene.

Transient Aspects are Aspects that derive from the continuous action of an individual. Transient Aspects last only until the placing character acts again, though he may use the Aspect in this last turn of its existence.

A character may also use a manoeuvre to remove an Aspect placed by an earlier manoeuvre. Doing this requires a relevant skill Test at difficulty 2.

Example

Brutus the Foolish has been given the Aspect *In My Sights* by a Saxon with a throwing axe. On his turn he decides to dive for cover. An Agility Test at difficulty 2 can be made to remove this troublesome Aspect before it is used by the Saxon. However, doing this counts as Brutus' action for that turn of combat.

Create an Obstruction

One way to inhibit movement is to create an obstruction, which applies a pass value to the border between two zones. The precise nature of the barrier and its duration (whether it needs to be maintained or whether it is permanent) depends entirely upon the narrative offered by the player. It is subject to table approval.

The player declares a target zone boundary and declares a Skill to be used, then narrates his attempt. A Test is made against difficulty 2. If the Test succeeds, then the player may place a pass value of two on any single border of the zone he has declared as his target. If a pass value already exists on the border, it may be increased by +1.

Do Something Else

Players invariably will want to do something that doesn't naturally fall into one of the above three actions. This is fine and subject to table consensus and a plausible narrative. A player may want to juggle the flagons of ale, by making an Agility Test, or any of a

host of other creative things. The Storyteller simply sets a difficulty for the Test and works out how it impacts what is going on.

As with other combat actions, the decision to do something else may be preceded by a free one-zone move. The player can be compelled to prevent the action. If a compel is accepted the player's action ends. Whatever the result, the process should be narrated once it is completed.

Example

Brutus the Foolish is fighting a duel before a battle with the Saxon berserker, Eldred. Brutus has a Melee Combat skill of 5 and is armed with a spatha, doing +4 damage. He has a specialism Stunt that gives him a +1 bonus to Melee Combat in such hero duels. Brutus also has leather armour and a shield, for an absorption score of 2. He has a Health score of 4.

Eldred, on the other hand has a Melee Combat skill of 4 and a Strength skill of 5, along with a Stunt that lets him use the Strength to defend himself in combat. He has no armour, but has a battleaxe, which does +4 damage. Due to a Stunt and high strength, Eldred has a Health score of 8.

Brutus has an Awareness skill of 2. Eldred has an Awareness skill of 3. Eldred acts first.

Turn 1

Acting first, Eldred attacks with Melee Combat. He pays a Fate Point to use his *Beserker Rage* Aspect for a +2 bonus and gains a result of 7. Brutus uses Melee Combat for defence and does not use any Fate Points, though the specialism grants a +1 bonus to the skill. He gains a result of 6.

Eldred's attack beats Brutus' defence with a Degree of Success of $7-6=1$. He has +4 damage from the axe, so he does $1 + 4 = 5$ damage. The damage level is reduced to $5-2=3$ by Brutus' armour and shield (Absorption 2). Brutus suffers 3 points of Health damage, reducing his Health score to 1. But he is still in the fight without taking any Consequences.

Brutus goes for the quick kill. He pays two Fate Points to use his Aspects *More Brawn than Brains* and *The Glory of the Heroic Duel* to get a +4 bonus to his Melee Skill of 5, boosted to 6 by the specialism Stunt. After rolling, he has a result of 10. Eldred relies on his toughness and strength and does not spend any Fate Points on defence. He gets a result of 4. Brutus' Degree of Success is $10 - 4 = 6$. Brutus' Spatha has +4 damage, which boosts the overall damage to Eldred to 10. Eldred has no armour.

With a Health of 8, Eldred has to take a Consequence to stay in the fight. He takes a Moderate Consequence of *Gaping Wound*, which mitigates 4 points of damage and leaves him with a Health score of 2.

Turn 2

Eldred knows he must finish his enemy off quickly to win. He spends two Fate Points, using the Aspects *Huge* and *Lust for Bloody Battle*, for a net +4 bonus. Brutus uses Eldred's *Gaping Wound* Consequence for a free +2 to his defence roll (he can do it once), but does not spend any Fate Points. Eldred gains an impressive result of 10. Brutus has a result of 8.

Eldred's Degree of Success is 2. The axe still does +4 damage. Brutus' armour reduces damage by 2. The result is 4 points of Health damage to Brutus. Brutus has to take a Consequence to avoid being taken out. He takes a Moderate Consequence of *Reeling from Blow to the Head* to negate all 4 points of damage.

Now it is Brutus' turn to attack. He does not use any Aspects or Fate Points. Eldred, however, decides to use Brutus' *Reeling from a Blow to the Head* Consequence for a free +2 bonus to defence. Both attacker and defender gain a result of 6.

This means the attack succeeds minimally. Brutus has a degree of success of 0, but still does +4 damage from the spatha due to Eldred's lack of armour. Eldred, with Health reduced to 2 must take a Severe Consequence, or be taken out.

Special Rules

Ambushes

A group or warband with a savvy leader can attempt to ambush another group of combatants. To decide whether an ambush is successful, the leader of the ambushers must make a Strategy and Tactics Test against the best Awareness or Strategy and Tactics skill amongst the targets.

If an ambush works, the ambushers each gain a free attack before the usual combat sequence begins. These attacks can be defended against normally.

An individual may also attempt to ambush another individual. This uses the Stealth skill rather than Strategy and Tactics, and is opposed by the Awareness skill of the victim. If an individual ambush such as this succeeds, the ambusher again gets a free attack at a +2 bonus, as if using a free Aspect placed by the earlier Stealth Test.

Going Defensive

During a combat a player might decide to forsake attacking and other activities to do nothing but defend himself. On a turn when he does this he gains a +2 bonus to the defence roll, but can take no other actions. This option must be chosen at the start of the turn.

If the player decides to act after a turn spent doing nothing but defence, any spin gained as a result of the defence can be spent normally. Stunts that allow a character to do damage as a result of a successful defence can also be used.

Going Offensive

A particularly bold, berserk or foolish player can also forsake defence in order to concentrate on attacks. In any Turn that he does this he has a +2 bonus to the attack roll, but is not really defending himself. His total defence is treated as zero until he next gets the chance to act.

Mounted Combat

A character fighting from horseback gains a couple of advantages. Firstly, if riding a trained warhorse, the Riding skill can be used to support the warrior's melee combat skill. Secondly, against unmounted enemies of man size or smaller, the character gains a +1 bonus to damage.

Finally, if there is time and space, a horseman with a melee weapon can charge into battle, making a Riding Test as a manoeuvre to give a bonus of +2 to the next melee combat skill use. This counts as a free action. This can be stacked with the Heroic Charge Stunt.

Out of Arrows

Who wants to count arrows or bolts? Not us. It's way more fun to have an Aspect and let your opponents decide when you run out of missiles. Anyone using a bow or crossbow that makes three attacks or more in a scene automatically gets the Aspect *Out of ammo* which may be compelled by opponents. The archer doesn't have to accept the compel, and Fate Point, but must pay a Fate Point to keep firing missiles. The player may also perform an appropriate manoeuvre such as 'getting more arrows out of his supplies' or 'pulling arrows out of nearby bodies to remove this aspect until three more attacks have been made.

Warbands

Some combatants such as nameless soldiers, members of a gang of bandits, or Fae commoners, require less detail than full non-player characters and are individually of little importance to the story. As such they are often vulnerable in a fight. That said, such fighters can still be dangerous in a group. We call a group of such combatants a warband.

Warbands could be both enemies and allies of the player characters in a fight. The rules in this section make it possible to run a battle where the heroes have a dozen soldiers on their side whilst their enemies can have twice as many again. Here's how it works.

A warband member is described solely by his combat skill. This is a single skill encompassing all fighting and related skills. His armour and weapons are also described. All of those in a single warband are identically armed and armoured and have the same combat skill. The group has a number of Aspects less than or equal to the combat skill level.

The following table can be used as a guideline when selecting the combat skill level of a warband.

Combat Skill Level	Description
0	Completely Untrained
1	Limited Training, Militia
2	Professional
3	Veteran
4	Elite

Each member of a warband has a stress score of one, or his combat skill level, whichever is higher. Both Health and Composure damage are taken from this same score. When a warband member has stress reduced to zero, he is out of the fight. Any extra successes carry over to further warband members. Warbands and warband members are not allowed to take Consequences.

All members of a warband must be in the same zone, though it is permissible to split warbands into smaller groups. Indeed, when a warband attacks, it is normal to split it into one group for each opponent or opposing group of warbands.

A warband makes a single attack at a level equal to the combat skill level, with a bonus depending on the number of people in the group as follows. No more than six people may attack a single opponent.

Number in Group	Bonus
1	0
2 to 3	+1
4 to 6	+2

Defences, however, do not have these number-dependent bonuses, but are made at a level equal to the base combat skill. Those taken out in armed combat are incapacitated and possibly dead, see below. Warband members taken out in unarmed combat will recover automatically once the fight is over.

Example

After the successful hero duel with Eldred, Brutus the Foolish single-handedly takes on a Warband of 6 warriors, who have a combat skill of 2. They have a net skill level of 4 when attacking, due to their numbers. However, their defence skill is still 2. With a combat skill level of 2, each Warband member has 2 stress levels.

The Warband is armoured with leather armour and shields, for an Absorption score of 2. In the first turn of a combat against them, Brutus gains a result of 5. This is a Degree of Success of $5-2=3$. Brutus is armed with a spatha, which does +4 damage. He does a total of $3+4-2=5$ levels of damage against the warband. This is enough to take out two of its members and wound a third with the one stress left over.

Psychological Warfare

The Intimidate skill **can** be used in a fight against warbands. Such a skill, when used against a group, will cause a number equal to the Degree of Success to flee (if possible) or surrender (if not). In any case, these warband members are considered taken out for the duration of the battle, though they might reappear later.

Weapons and armour are ignored. If the warband has a leader, they defend against the attack using either their Leadership or Intimidation skill. Otherwise, the defence is made at a level equal to a warband member's combat skill. Unlike defences against ordinary attacks, either of these defences does gain a bonus for the number of people in the group.

Shield Walls

A group of warriors armed with shields can elect to block rather than attack. In this case, the defence roll *does* gain the bonus due to numbers. Moreover, the result of the defence Test must be beaten by a skill such as Strategy and Tactics or Agility in order to move into or through the zone containing the warriors.

Not every warband has the training and discipline to form a shield wall. An appropriate Aspect indicating such is needed to use this action.

Death and Healing

As a default, any warriors taken out in an armed conflict will be dead. However, a trained healer can, after the fight is over, make a single Healing Test against difficulty zero. The Degree of Success is the number of warband members saved from death. With a short rest, such men at arms will be fully recovered.

Only one such Healing Test is allowed, but if more than one healer is available, then they can support the main healer using the 'Assisting another character' rule on page 89.



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Chapter 8 - Battle

Battles involving dozens, hundreds or even thousands of participants are an important part of Age of Arthur. A typical battle, if there is such a thing, centres on shield walls of infantry, manoeuvring for position, seeking to overwhelm the enemy with strength, skill and numbers. This foundation of infantry is often supported by special troops such as British cavalry, archers and other skirmishers. Many armies are further supported by magic, as described below. The winner of the conflict between opposing magicians gives an advantage to their army.

However, the skill of a general and individual heroics are just as important when winning a battle as the size of an army and the skill of its troops.

Armies

For simplicity, a force in the mass combat system is referred to as an army, regardless of its size. The person in charge of an army is referred to as a general, regardless of his actual title. The general is fundamental to the outcome of mass combat. He is usually either a player character or a major named NPC.

An army is described simply by five statistics.

- **Size:** The number of combatants in the army.
- **Army Skill:** The main relevant skill of a typical soldier in the army, rather than the elite or honoured warriors. As a guideline, the following skill levels are appropriate.

Army Skill Level	Description
0	Completely Untrained
1	Limited Training, Militia
2	Professional
3	Veteran
4	Chosen men

- **Generals:** The Army Skill is supported by both the Strategy and Tactics and Leadership skills of its general. If a general's Strategy and Tactics or Leadership skill is equal to or higher than that of the army, then the Army Skill gets a +1 bonus. If both skills are equal to or higher than that of the army, then the Army Skill gets a +2 bonus
- **Aspects:** An army will have between one and five Aspects. These Aspects can, for example, describe an army's morale and general condition, any special types of warrior or elites, or their equipment.
- **Stress Score:** An army's stress score is special in that it depends on both its own size and the size of the army it is fighting. In any case, the larger army in a battle always has a stress score of 10. The stress score of the smaller army depends on its relative size. For example, an army of 500 facing an army of 1000 will have 5 stress. If it has just 200 men, it will have a mere 2 stress.

Size of Smaller Army	Stress Score
10% of larger army or less	1
Up to 20% of larger army	2
Up to 30% of larger army	3
Up to 40% of larger army	4
Up to 50% of larger army	5
Up to 60% of larger army	6
Up to 70% of larger army	7
Up to 80% of larger army	8
Up to 90% of larger army	9
More than 90% of larger army	10

It can be handy visually to represent the stress scores of the armies with tokens on the table, removing tokens as damage is taken. If one army is twice the size or bigger than the other one then it gets an extra Aspect, *Seriously Outnumbers the Enemy*, which it can use once for free in the actual battle, at no Fate Point cost. Various other factors in the preliminaries, below, also set up various free Aspects.

Splitting your forces

One advantage the smaller army has in a battle is that it gets to attack, and apply damage, first. Some commanders might try to take advantage of this by splitting their army. If they do this, each force needs its own general, and the skills of the general of a particular force are the ones that add to that force's army skill level.

Preliminaries

Before the battle proper begins, armies jockey for position, personal combats take place between champions of each side and wizards and druids parade and curse the enemy. The mechanics for these initial steps are as follows.

Manoeuvring

Before the battle begins, the generals of each side make an opposed Strategy and Tactics Test to get their armies into the best position relative to the opposing forces. Shield walls need to be placed where they are the most advantageous according to the terrain, the enemy's weak spots need to be exploited and one's own weak spots need to be covered. Tricks in the coming battle, such as encircling and flanking manoeuvres need to be set up. This manoeuvring phase also accounts for setting up any siege weapons and artillery, or if appropriate, landing ships and organising coastal defences.

The winner of this opposed Test gets to place an Aspect reflecting position on one of the two armies. When the actual battle begins, the side whose general placed this Aspect can use it once for no Fate Point cost.

Magic

Certain forms of magic can affect the coming conflict. Druidic magic can be used to affect the local weather and hurl curses at the enemy. Glamour can create distracting illusions. Faith magic can be used to bless one's own forces and call upon Heaven's favour.

In any case, a magician from each army coordinates such battlefield magic. Both of these magicians make an opposed Test in the relevant magic skill. The winner of this magical duel is able to place an Aspect reflecting this magical outcome on his own or the opposing army. When the actual battle begins, the side whose magician placed this Aspect can use it once for no Fate Point cost.

It is possible that a side might have more than one magician. In this case, a leading magician is still selected to make the actual roll, as above. Any supporting magicians can support the magic user making the actual opposed roll using the assisting another character rules on page 89.

Champions

Sometimes, heroes will step forth from the ranks to fight before the main action of the battle begins. Such clashes may be formal or informal affairs, and are referred to as *hero duels*. They typically continue until one hero surrenders, retreats, or receives a serious injury. These hero battles can also be fought to the death.

Typically one champion from each side steps forth to fight. The winner of the fight gets to place an Aspect reflecting the effect of the victory on his own or the opposing army. When the actual battle begins, the side whose champion placed this Aspect can use it once for no Fate Point cost.

If more than one champion comes forward from each side for individual combat, there are a number of individual one on one fights at this stage, or possibly a small melee between groups. In this case, the side that does the best overall gets to place the free Aspect. This may involve a decision on the part of the caller or Storyteller.

Skiping the Preliminaries

There will not be magical showdowns or hero duels before every single battle. In some battles these things will take place, but are unimportant to the story. For example, a hero duel is unimportant to the story if it is between unknown NPCs.

The magic and champions phase of a battle are optional examples of colour that can be skipped when appropriate. You may wish to add your own preliminary events that influence the forthcoming bloodshed.

Other Factors

Terrain and Weather

Such things as terrain and weather conditions are simply another Aspect, which may be used by either army.

Fortifications

An army fighting from good fortifications gains an Aspect, Fortifications, which can be used once for free. Partial or inadequately prepared fortifications and such things as quickly erected wooden palisades also provide Aspects, but these cost Fate Points, as usual, to use.

The Battle

The actual battle is divided into turns, each lasting between fifteen minutes and an hour. Like personal combat, a battle is a strict sequence of events. Battles do not use maps and zones. In order to run a battle, one player should be named as caller. The caller is usually the Storyteller, but if one player's character is not involved in the battle, it makes sense for him to call, while the Storyteller just controls the opposition to the player characters.

The duty of the caller is to run the sequence of events in a battle: he ensures that each phase is given sufficient time and that there is a smooth pace as phases proceed.

Individual Heroics

At the start of the turn, individual heroes such as the player characters can try to influence the course of a battle. Generals cannot indulge in such heroics, they have their own roles to play, described below.

A character who seeks such heroism must pay a Fate Point to make a relevant skill Test, depending on what they are trying to do. Weapon skills, representing heroism in the fight, are always appropriate, but other skills can also have an impact if the table agrees.

The difficulty of the skill Test is equal to the remaining stress of the opposing army. The player can spend Fate Points to aid this Test as usual. If the skill test succeeds, it places an Aspect on an army, which can, as usual for placed Aspects, be invoked once for no Fate Point cost by the character's army.

If the skill Test fails, the would-be hero suffers Health damage equal to the number the Test failed by. Note that individual heroics from major characters on the side of the smaller army are resolved first.

Getting Personal

Quite often in a battle, the player characters will seek to take out important NPCs on the enemy side, with magic users and enemy generals being prime targets. Let them try!

Attempting to get personal in this way does not cost any Fate Points. It interrupts the flow of a battle with a personal combat. This combat will not typically be against the important foe alone. The NPC will be protected by a Warband with combat skill and armaments the same as that of the army. The number in the Warband will be twice the army's current stress score. Player characters will need to take on the Warband as well as the target. It is therefore something best done by more than one player character. If a player character wants to try to influence the course of a battle alone, the rule for individual heroics is above.

Taking out a major NPC gives a free Aspect indicating the fallen enemy or possible loss of morale. Taking out the leader of an army's forces might lead to a withdrawal or surrender, at the Storyteller's discretion. It also means the army no longer benefits from its general's Leadership and Strategy and Tactics skills. A deputy may step forward to take up command but they will generally be at one level lower than the dead general unless there is a specific character described who might occupy this role.

Army Actions

After any individual heroics, the armies attack. The smaller army attacks first and the other force defends. Ties are resolved by army skill level, with the higher going first. If there is still a tie, the army of the general with the higher leadership skill goes first. Damage from a successful attack is inflicted against the opposition's stress with the amount of damage equalling half the Degree of Success, rounded up. A draw from an attack does no damage but lets the attacker place an Aspect. As usual for manoeuvres, this Aspect can be used once for free by the army that placed it at no Fate Point cost.

The army general can spend his Fate Points to use any appropriate Aspects, which might include his own, those of the armies fighting, any generated through individual heroics, and any terrain or scene Aspects. Storyteller generals take Fate Points from the Storyteller's pool of Fate Points as usual.

Armies may not take Consequences to mitigate stress loss.

Resolution

When an army is reduced to zero stress, it has no active combatants remaining on the field. An army may also concede a conflict by withdrawing (if possible) or surrendering. This ends the battle, but prevents further stress loss on the part of the defeated army.

Even an army reduced to zero stress has probably not fought to the last man. As indicated below, many of the losses will be those who have fled the field, or are merely wounded.

The Aftermath

When a battle is over, an army has lost a proportion of its numbers equal to the fraction of its damage stress that has been checked off. However, not all of these losses are necessarily casualties. Some may represent troops who have merely withdrawn or fled, or who were wounded.

Thus, when a battle is over, the general can make a Leadership Test at difficulty 2 to recover numbers equal to 10% of their losses for each Degree of Success. Using the assisting another character rules on page 89, a healer can make a Skill Test to assist the general in recovering losses, by healing wounded soldiers.

Withdrawal and Surrender

An army can withdraw from battle or surrender at the end of a turn. It suffers loss in numbers as indicated above. A Leadership Test can recover some of its losses. An army that withdraws gives up the ground it was holding to the enemy. It means losing, but better to lose than to be wiped out!

Unfortunately, in some situations, for example when defending fortifications, an army cannot withdraw. In this case, the only options are to fight until it reaches zero stress, or surrender. What happens to an army that surrenders, and to the people it was protecting, depends on the surrender terms agreed to. Giving up prisoners to the victors is a common custom.

Effects on Player Characters

The survivors within an army that has taken losses are often battered and bruised, and sometime seriously injured. This includes the player characters, and major NPCs the Storyteller wants to keep track of.

At the end of a battle, each player character and major NPC makes a physical Endurance Test (see page 95) at a difficulty equal to the amount of stress his army has lost. If the

army was on the losing side then add a +2 to the difficulty; if the army was reduced to 0 stress then add +4 to the difficulty.

The Test can be made using any skill that can be used for defence in combat. As usual for an Endurance Test, if it fails, the character suffers physical stress equal to the number it failed by.

Example

This example uses the suggested preliminary steps outlined above.

An army of 1000 Angles is attacking the city of Lindum, which is defended by a mere 400 men. Lindum's army are professionals (skill level 2) with the Aspects *Defending the City* and *Reinforced by Veteran Mercenaries*. The general of the armies of Lindum is Junius Belarus. He has a Leadership skill of 3 and a Strategy and Tactics skill of 4. Both of these are higher than the Lindum army skill level and so give it a +2 bonus, raising it to 4.

The Angles are veterans (skill level 3), with the Aspects *The Glory of Battle*, *Never Retreat* and *Superstitious*. They are led by Prince Aldhelm, who has both Leadership and Strategy and Tactics skills of 3. These skills are decent, but do not affect the army skill level.

Due to size, the army of Lindum has 4 stress, whereas the Angles have 10 stress. The Angle army has a free Aspect of *Seriously Outnumbers the Enemy*. The Lindum army, on the other hand, has a free Aspect of *Fortifications*.

Preliminaries

First of all, the armies manoeuvre. Junius Belarus gets a result of 5 on a Strategy and Tactics skill Test. Prince Aldhelm gets a result of 4. The Lindum army wins this Test and gains a free Aspect of *Concentration of Forces*.

Next comes magic. The druid Drustan ap Bren matches power with a powerful Angle sorcerer. Both Drustan ap Bren and the Angle gain results of 6 on the relevant magic skill Tests. Their magic essentially cancels out and neither side gets to place a magical Aspect.

The final step before the battle is the duel of champions. The Angle champion is an experienced fighter and known killer. On the Lindum side, Brutus the Foolish has his Aspect *More Brawn than Brains* compelled by the Angle's goads, accepting a Fate Point to fight a duel to the death. Brutus wins, but suffers a Moderate Consequence in the process. The Lindum army gains the free Aspect *Fresh Rush of Confidence*.

Turn 1

Firstly, Brutus the Foolish pays a Fate Point to attempt a heroic act against the Angles. However, they still have a stress score of 10, meaning Brutus must make a relevant skill Test at difficulty 10 for such heroics. Unsurprisingly, he fails, with a Melee Combat skill roll of 4, meaning he suffers 6 Health damage. He is forced to take a Severe Consequence and is likely to be out of the fight. A further failure will probably get him killed.

With no more attempted heroics, the armies act. Lindum, as the smaller army, gets to attack first. General Junius decides to use the Free Aspects *Concentration of Forces* and *Fresh Rush of Confidence* to attack with a +4 bonus to the boosted army skill of 4. Adding his 4dF dice roll, the net skill total is 7.

The Angle army, with a skill level 3, does not use any Aspects to defend. After a 4dF dice roll, the outcome is 2. The Lindum army succeeds in its attack, with a success level of $7-2=5$. Half of this, rounded up, is 3. The Angle army suffers 3 stress, reducing the total to 7.

When the Angles attack, Prince Aldhelm uses the free Aspect *Seriously Outnumbers the Enemy* for a +2 bonus. The Lindum forces use the free Aspect *Fortifications* for a +2 bonus to defence. Both sides, when they roll, gain results of 6. The Lindum army suffers no damage as a result of the Angle attack, but does have the free Aspect *Badly Pressed* placed on it.

Badly Pressed is the only free Aspect remaining. Any further bonuses will have to come from Fate Points and manoeuvres through heroic acts.

Turn 2

This turn, there are no heroic acts or manoeuvres and no Aspects are used in the course of the attack of the Lindum army. The Lindum army gets a result of 4 in its attack. The Angle army gets a result of 3, meaning it loses one point of stress. The Angle stress total is now 6.

On their turn, the Angles use the free *Badly Pressed* Aspect for a +2 bonus to attack. General Junius Belarus spends a Fate Point on the Aspect *Defending the City* for a +2 bonus to defence. However, when it is time to roll, the Angles have a result of 7, whereas the Lindum army has a result of 5. The Lindum army suffers 1 point of damage, leaving 3 points of stress remaining. Things are now very close.

Turn 3

This time, the druid Drustan ap Bren pays a Fate Point to use his druidic magic in a heroic act. This requires a skill Test at difficulty 6, the present stress score of the Angles. Drustan succeeds, placing the free Aspect *Druidic Curses* on the Angle army.

When it is Lindum's turn to attack, General Junius Belarus is determined to do all the damage he can against the Angle army. He uses the free Aspect placed by Drustan and spends his last two Fate Points to use the Lindum army's Aspect *Reinforced by Veteran Mercenaries* along with the Angle army's Aspect *Superstitious* against them, for a total bonus of +6. When he rolls, he gains a mighty total of 11.

Prince Aldhelm uses the last Fate Point available to the Angles to use the Aspect *Never Retreat* for a +2 bonus to defence. He is quite lucky with the roll, gaining +3 on 4dF for a total of $3+2+3=8$. The Angle army still takes 2 damage, reducing its stress score to 4. Over half of its numbers are gone, but it is still in the battle.

It is the Angles' turn to attack next with no Fate Points remaining. Things are desperate for both sides.



Chapter 9 - Magic and the Gods

In the Age of Arthur, skilled warriors and a strong sword arm brings power and authority. However, underpinning such visible expressions of might are the many paths of magic that continue to pierce the otherworld, and bring ancient power to life at the behest of those with the knowledge to wield such dangerous arts. The Fae are watching, with glamour and old magic. Perhaps their time will come again in this age of chaos? The gods have not forgotten us. The old gods of Britain may slumber due to the long occupation, but their power is still felt in the land. The Saxons have brought their gods to Britain and the Roman Christ god is seeing many new followers rally to his cross. Magic and the gods could yet prove to be as pivotal to the future of Britain as the strength of armies and the outcome of battles.

There are several major magical paths available, each described by a particular skill and Stunts related to that skill. A specific Stunt that represents an innate magical ability is required to learn each magical skill, with extra Stunts indicating further powers or specialisation. The precise nature of magic, both what it can do and how it works, depends strongly on the magical path taken.

Some individuals not born with such a talent for magic can still use magic because of their training as a bard, or through the favour of the gods. The powers of such individuals tends to be less flexible and powerful in scope than those with magical skills, but is still sometimes significant. Such powers are usually described by Stunts and Aspects.

Divination

There are a number of different styles of divination available in the Age of Arthur setting. The main examples are astrology, augury (divination from the movements of birds), dream visions, ectomancy (divination from the entrails of a slain animal) and pyromancy (divination by looking at smoke from a fire on which special incense has been burned). A character with the Divination skill is trained in one of these styles. All styles of divination work the same way mechanically.

With suitable time and preparation, Divination can be used to find out information about people, places and events in the past, present or future. Examples of preparation include calculations involving star charts for astrology, or going into deep sleep for

dream visions. Any attempt to divine information costs a Fate Point and requires a Divination skill Test.

The Test is at difficulty 2 if the information is general and widely known and concerns the present or recent past. The difficulty is increased by 2 if the information desired concerns the distant past or near future. It increases by 2 again if the information sought is obscure or specific.

Multiple increases to difficulty might apply. A further +2 to difficulty applies if the preparations involved in the divination are imperfect, but could still work. For example, the difficulty to divine specific (+2) information about an obscure (+2) event in the future (+2) is at difficulty 8 (including the base start difficulty of 2). Note that all future events only represent what is likely to happen if events run their natural course, they can sometimes be changed if interfered with.

A player can also use the Divination skill (and pay the usual Fate Point cost) to state information concerning what a divination has found rather than asking the Storyteller for details. The Storyteller may either accept the statement of information, or modify it and return the Fate Point to the player. If accepted, the information creates a new Aspect on a person, an item, or the scene.

Example

Galatea is an astrologer who is trying to track down the exact location of the magical sword known as Dyrnwyn. She does not know precisely when the sword was forged, but does have the precise dates of some historic events where the sword was involved. These events provide enough information to perform astrological calculations, but add +2 to the difficulty.

Further, the information sought is both obscure (nobody really knows where the sword is) and specific (Galatea wants the precise location of the sword), adding a further +4 to the difficulty. The overall difficulty of the Divination Test is 8.

Druidic Magic

A practitioner of Druidic magic can call upon the old gods to bless friends and curse enemies. Mechanically, a blessing or curse is placed on a target using the Druidic magic skill. In the case of a blessing, the skill Test is at difficulty 2. A curse on an individual creates a Test opposed by a Willpower, Druidic Magic or Faith Skill Test by the target.

If a blessing or curse is placed successfully, the target gains a temporary Aspect representing the nature of the blessing or the curse. A druid can also bless himself or for

that matter, curse himself, though that is, presumably, less likely. A blessing or curse is a special case of a manoeuvre (page 88).

The recipient of a blessing can invoke the blessing Aspect once for free. The enemies of a victim of a curse can invoke the curse Aspect once for free. The target of a blessing or a curse must be present in the scene where it is placed. This is a temporary Aspect and lasts only for the duration of that particular scene.

A druid can also use Druidic Magic to make a mental attack, defended against as above. Such an attack inflicts composure damage. A Consequence taken as a result of this damage is a curse that potentially lasts longer than one placed by a manoeuvre, unless it is cured by magic. The curse can, as usual, be used in play once for free; further uses cost a Fate Point each time.

Examples of Blessings: Destined Fortunate Meeting, Golden Tongue, Nimble as a Cat, Strength of Ten Men, Unstoppable Warrior

Examples of Curses: Lamé Leg, Stammering Tongue, Unlucky in Love, Vulnerable in Battle, Weakness of Will

Druids who also have the Weathermonger stunt can use their magic to affect the weather. As noted in the stunt description, for mild changes appropriate to the season, this is a difficulty 2 Test, with unseasonal or extreme conditions adding to the difficulty. A massive storm, for example, will be at difficulty 6 in the storm season, or difficulty 8 outside it.

Changing the weather typically requires four hours of ceremony, with the Degree of Success reducing the time needed according to the time track on page 89. Hostile weather adds +2 to the difficulty of all Tests where it is a problem, as well as adding a relevant Aspect. Extreme weather conditions leave a 'damage' Aspect on the scene even when the weather itself has returned to normal. This Aspect might be to do with destroyed and damaged buildings, floods or snowdrifts.

Such damage Aspects are similar to Consequences. Indeed, a damage Aspect can be removed in the same way as a Severe Consequence, whether through time and a series of repairs with no actual coordination or Tests needed, or major work undertaken with a relevant Test at difficulty 6.

Example

The druid Drustan ap Bren decides to show off his power by causing a small snowstorm in the middle of summer. This Test is at difficulty 4, for unseasonable weather.

He has a Druidic Magic skill of 5 and spends a Fate Point to use his Aspect *Tutored by Myrddin*, bringing the skill to 7. On 4dF, he rolls -1, for a net total of 6.

Since the difficulty of the roll was 4, Drustan succeeds on his attempt to manipulate the weather. Moreover, the Degree of Success is two, meaning Drustan gains two shifts on the time track for the time needed to change the weather, reducing the time needed to perform his weather-changing magic from a few hours to half an hour; quite an impressive feat.

If instead, Drustan had wanted a fierce blizzard, blanketing the area in snow and ice, the difficulty would have been 8, a difficulty of 6 for extreme conditions, with +2 extra difficulty for the weather being unseasonal. If Drustan had attempted this, he would not have succeeded in affecting the weather with the above dice roll, instead wasting several hours on chanting and ceremony.

Faith

Dedicated worshippers of the Christian God can gain the Faith skill and some related Stunts. In order to have the Faith skill, a character must have an Aspect reflecting sincere religious beliefs.

The main use of the Faith skill is to oppose other, profane, forms of magic. The Faith skill can be used by a character as a defence against a magical attack, or to neutralise magic already in effect. The chance of success is determined by an opposed Test between Faith and the opposed magical skill.

As well as defending himself against magic, a character with Faith can spend a Fate Point and make a Test to defend someone else he wants to protect from a magical attack, as above.

Glamour

In order to learn the Glamour skill, a character must have an Aspect indicating Fae blood or some other appropriate source of innate magical ability, as well as the Fae-blooded stunt. Essentially, what the Glamour skill does is create illusions. All Fae know this skill, at least to some degree.

Illusions created with the Glamour skill are extremely temporary, lasting but a minute. They also vanish when touched. Aside from this limitation a glamour can affect any sense. There are glamours involving sight, sound, smell and even taste. The most common use of a glamour is to impress or confuse. Mechanically, a Glamour skill Test is made to place an Aspect on a person (including the one weaving the glamour) or on the scene. As usual for manoeuvres, such an Aspect can be invoked once for no Fate Point cost.

Examples of glamours include shrouding an area in mist or gloom, distracting noises coming from the distance, or making someone temporarily supernaturally beautiful or hideous. Glamours are fixed to people, objects, or locations. They will only move independently when mentally commanded to do so. These commands require concentration. In a conflict, maintaining a moving glamour counts as a character's main action.

Most Tests of the Glamour skill are against difficulty 2, though the difficulty is increased if more than one sense is involved in a glamour, or the glamour is moving. Attempts to imitate something real with a glamour only work if the result of the Glamour skill Test beats an Awareness Test made by an observer. If the observer's result is higher, he or she is convinced that something is not right. He or she may not have the experience to say that the source of the wrongness is a glamour.

If the glamour is intending to mimic someone or something very familiar to the observer, the observer gains a +2 bonus to the Awareness Test.

Without appropriate Stunts, the Glamour skill cannot affect material things, or make objects or people undetectable to the senses (rather than merely disguising them).

Example

The Fae-blooded magic worker, Yvaine, decides to scare off a group of bandits by conjuring up an illusion of a forest fire. The illusion involves sight, sound and a sense of heat. Three sense are involved, so a difficulty 6 Glamour Test is required to create it.

This Test fails. As the bandits close Yvaine tries something more modest, a glamour affecting her own appearance. She changes her features, adding a sparkle to her eyes, making her seem both cold and magically powerful. This requires a Glamour Test at a more modest difficulty of 2, which succeeds, granting her the temporary Aspect *Fearsome Demeanour* which will help with an Intimidation Test to frighten the bandits off. The Aspect can be brought into play at no Fate Point cost to Yvaine the first time she uses it.

Plant and Root

Plant and Root is the ancient art of the herbalists. It draws magical effects through picking, preparing and mixing plants. Many know the properties of plants and can create infusions and balms, but only a truly skilled practitioner is able to coax the magic from plants.

Creating an infusion using the Plant and Root skill requires a day's work, including both finding and picking appropriate plants and preparing them. Preparation needs some facilities, but no more than can be found in a well-equipped kitchen. A Test must be made at difficulty 2 for an infusion to work. Better results on the skill Test reduce the time needed according to the time track on page 89.

Many plants are more effective when used for magic at particular points of the celestial calendar, or under certain phases of the moon. Thus, Lore skills involving astrology can act as complementary skills to Plant and Root.

One who consumes an infusion gains a temporary Aspect for a scene. The Aspect will depend on the nature of the infusion prepared. It can be used once at no Fate Point cost and will usually materially affect the consumer's body, or perhaps their mind.

Some examples of infusions and Aspects are:

Infusion	Aspect
Mild Poison	Nauseated
Healing Salve	Responsive to Healing
Distilled Liquor	Drunk
The Soldier's Draft	Iron Stamina
The Bard's Tonic	Clear Voice
The Warrior's Brew	Berserk Rage

Rune Magic

The Saxons have brought their runes, the Futhark, to Britannia. These 24 runes are used as the Saxon written script. However, knowing the letters is not the same thing as understanding the way they resonate with the deeper world of magic. To one of the wise men, or wizards, these runes have an intrinsic power that can imbue places or objects with potent magic. When used for magic the runes are carved into wood, stone and metal and empowered by the wizard through song, dance and animal sacrifice to create magical effects.

Rune Magic is the skill used by wizards to enchant objects with the power of the runes. To learn it, the character must know the Futhark alphabet as part of his or her language skill. In rules terms, enchanting an object needs relevant runes to be inscribed onto it and for the wizard to make a Rune Magic Test at difficulty 2 and spend a Fate Point. Normally, it takes a full day to inscribe a rune. A high Degree of Success can reduce this time according to the time track on page 89.

A rune-enchanted item gains an Aspect that can be brought into play by its wielder at the usual Fate Point cost. The enchantment lasts forever, or until the runes are defaced. Only one set of runes, and so only one rune-magic Aspect, can be placed on an individual item.

Example Aspects: Dragonslayer, Clean water, Untangled beard, Turn aside blows, Elfslayer, Kinslayer, Spirits unwelcome

Magic and Human Sacrifice

Some NPC villains practice human sacrifice to aid Divination, Druidic Magic or Rune Magic. Gaining Magical benefit from human sacrifice requires an appropriate stunt to grant access to these bonuses. A character with such a stunt can use a sacrifice to create an Aspect on a scene, such as *Life Given to the Gods*, *Willing Sacrifice*, or *Echoing Screams of Agonising Death*.

This Aspect can be used once at no Fate Point cost on a relevant skill Test. Most typically, this bonus is gained during a magical skill Test made when the sacrifice is performed, but there are other possibilities. For instance, a Druidic blessing made during a human sacrifice might grant an additional Aspect associated with the sacrifice. This extra Aspect can be used once at no Fate Point cost by the one who has been blessed. Druidic curses and Rune Magic present similar opportunities for later use.

Shapechanging

The Shapechanging skill lets a character alter his form into that of one or more animals. One animal shape is known for each level of the skill. Changing to or from animal form costs a Fate Point, but there is no limit to how long a change to animal form can last. Common animal forms include those of a bear, wolf, horse, hawk and salmon. However, others are certainly possible.

In order to shift into the form of an animal, the character must have a specially prepared animal skin. No clothing or possessions other than the animal skin change form with the character. If the animal skin is stolen or destroyed, the character can make another from the skin of an animal he has killed. Making a new skin involves a magical cere-

mony, which lasts all day. Someone who has stolen an animal skin cannot use it to change form unless he has this skill and knows the form of that animal.

While in animal form the character gains the animal's physical attributes. Thus, someone in fish form can swim well and has no problems underwater, someone in horse form can gallop at the speed of a horse and bear heavy loads, and someone in bird form can fly. There are also some limitations. For instance, generally, the character will lose the ability to speak while in animal shape, unless he takes the form of an animal capable of speech, such as a raven.

A character's skills and stress scores do not change in animal form. However, the character gains a temporary Aspect, *Form of [animal]*. This Aspect can be used, with the table's approval, without any Fate Point cost, thus giving a +2 bonus or a single re-roll to any skill Test where the animal form helps. It can also be used by the Storyteller to impose a -2 penalty or a single re-roll to a skill Test where the animal form causes problems. When in the form of a small animal this Aspect will increase any physical damage inflicted on the character by 2 but does not otherwise affect (and indeed, may even boost) defences.

The *Form of [animal]* Aspect can also be compelled to make the character act more like the animal whose form he has taken. Such a compel grants Fate Points as usual.

Example

The Saxon wizard Osmund can change into bear and eagle forms. In bear form, he has the bear's physical powers, gaining the Stunts *Tough*, *Armoured Skin* and *Natural Weapons (x2)*. The *Form of Bear* Aspect can be invoked at no Fate Point cost for feats of Strength, for brawling with the bear's natural weapons and for Awareness Tests involving smell. It can be compelled to make Osmund hungry or fly into a rage. It imposes penalties for most Tests involving stealth or subtlety.

In eagle form, Osmund has the Stunts *Flight* and *Swift*. The *Form of the Eagle* Aspect can be invoked at no Fate Point cost for Agility Tests involving rapid flight and Awareness Tests involving vision. However, eagles are small compared to people so the *Form of Eagle* Aspect works against Osmund in physical combat in that form, increasing the damage from any successful attack by 2.

Bards

Bards are related to druids, though are less magically powerful. A bard is a performer and storyteller, though he is much more than that. Bards, like druids, are fonts of wisdom

and knowledge and are widely respected. They also act as messengers, travelling from place to place, receiving hospitality in return for entertainment and news.

Traditionally, bardic knowledge is oral rather than written and a good bard has a prodigious memory. Bards often have magical talents, though not to the same extent as druids. Some bards are capable of casting satires, insults in poetic form that actually cause disfigurement or injury to a victim. Such a satire needs to be based on a sufficient element of truth to be effective. This rare talent means bards are feared as well as respected.

A character who is a Bard should have a relevant Aspect and can learn the following Stunts described in the examples in chapter 3: Bardic Knowledge, Bardic Protection, Biting Satire, Jack of All Trades, Song of Battle.

Gods of Britannia

There are a number of ancient British gods, still worshipped by the druids and pagans who have not embraced Christianity. Some of the most important of the old gods are listed below, along with how they were viewed by the Romans. The Romans often identified them with gods from their own pantheon.

These gods still have power in Britannia. Druidic magic works by invoking the power of the gods, but more than that, the gods themselves sometimes bless mortals with special gifts, or curse them. A blessing or curse takes the form of an Aspect, which might be as simple as something along the lines of "Blessed by Epona", or might be more specific, such as "Strength of Camulos" or "Silver Tongue of Mabon". Specific Aspects often refer to a god's personality or area of divine interest, for example sailing on the sea for Manawydan ap Lir. Such Aspects are permanent, and are usually taken as part of character creation, but they can also be earned using experience in play. They are entirely different in scope than blessings and curses placed by druids.

A character with such an Aspect is allowed to learn appropriate supernatural stunts. In some cases, Stunts normally reserved for animals are appropriate for use as supernatural ones. In other cases, Stunts which could be mundane are listed, but for that particular character are supernatural in nature. For example, the Vanish Stunt lets a character use the Stealth skill for short periods without cover. In the case of a character where the effect is supernatural, this means he can literally vanish for short periods of time. Of course, in any case, the effect is identical.

There are a host of minor local gods that reflect and govern the local lands, springs, rivers, forests and hills. There are also many more great old gods who slumber now, forgotten as the Christ god takes hold, but who may yet awaken to those that have the power to draw them back to Britannia. Although we cannot list all these gods here, look for them in your stories and as they are spoken of and remembered, they will have some power again, power in your story and in the lives of your player characters.

Andraste

Suggested Magical Stunts: Aura of Fear, Numbers are No Defence, Song of Battle, Weapon of Vengeance

Andraste is a bloody goddess of victory and vengeance. Enemy prisoners are sacrificed in sacred groves by those who wish to invoke her. Queen Boudicea made sacrifices to Andraste before her ill-fated rebellion against the Romans nearly four hundred years ago. Andraste is sometimes viewed as an Aspect of the Morrigan (see below).

Arawn, King of the Dead

Suggested Magical Stunts: Dark Adapted Eye, Diviner, Call Upon Spirits of the Departed, Vanish

Arawn is the King of Annwn, the underworld. He is seen as a god who rules his realm with wisdom and is not especially vengeful. He is the ruler of the dead rather than a god of death, though he is still feared. He was identified by the Romans with their god of the dead, Pluto.

Belenus, the Shining One

Suggested Magical Stunts: Dark Adapted Eye, Heroic Inspiration, Rally

Belenus is the king of the gods and represents the sun, fertility and kingship. At various times, the Romans identified Belenus with both Jupiter and Apollo, because of his roles as ruler and sun god. The festival of Beltaine is held in his honour and named after him.

Brigantia

Suggested Magical Stunts: Diviner, Far Shot, Lodestone, Second Sight, Precision Shot

Brigantia is a triple goddess, with three different forms depending on the function she assumes. In Hibernia and in parts of Britain she is known as Brigid.

The goddess' three forms are those of an attractive maiden, a comely mother and a hideous crone. The maiden is a goddess of archers and the hunt, similar to the Roman Diana and sometimes identified with her. The mother is goddess of childbirth and children, but also a goddess of the stars. She is sometimes known as Arianrhod. The crone is a goddess of the harvest, of magic and of wisdom. She is known by the name Cerridwen and sometimes identified with the Roman goddess Ceres.

Camulos

Suggested Magical Stunts: Beast of Burden, Planned Assault, Skin Like Iron, Tough (can be taken more than once if supernatural)

Camulos is a god of battle and strength, who was equated with Hercules by the Romans. Like Hercules, Camulos' symbols are the club and the lion skin. The god is also, as the name indicates, the patron of the city of Cameludunum. In the Kingdom of Rheged, in Northern Britain, Camulus is worshipped under the alternative name, Belatucader.

Cernunnos, The Horned God

Suggested Magical Stunts: Shapechanger, Scent Tracking

Cernunnos is both an animal god and guardian of the underworld, Annwn. He is also believed to be the ancestor of the British people. He was identified by the Romans with the cthonic father god, Dis Pater. The Fae being, Herne the Hunter (see page 182), the leader of the wild hunt, may be an avatar of Cernunnos.

Cocidius

Suggested Magical Stunts: Lodestone, Planned Assault, Scent Tracking, Weapon of Vengeance

Cocidius is a god both of war and the wild, worshipped in Northern Britain. He is depicted as a red painted warrior, armed with sword and shield. The Romans identified him with Mars, god of war.

Epona

Suggested Magical Stunts: Beast of Burden, Swift, Touch of Epona

Epona is a goddess of horses and fertility, worshipped as much by the Romans as by the Celts, at least before the Empire became Christian. Epona is more of a goddess of Gaul than of Britain, but she is worshipped in the south of the country. A great white horse commemorating the goddess is carved onto a hill close to the city of Venta Belgarum.

Epona is sometimes viewed as the maiden Aspect of the goddess Brigantia.

Goffanon

Suggested Magical Stunts: Belonging [magical weapon], Healing Touch, Skin like Iron, Magic Resistance

Goffanon is a god of both smithcraft and healing. A few weapons reputed to be forged by the god Goffanon himself can be found in Britain. Some of these weapons have remarkable magical powers. The most famous of these weapons is the sword of kings, Albion.

Traditionally, at any feast, the first toast is made to the god Goffanon. Goffanon was identified by the Romans with their smith god, Vulcan.

Lugh of Many Talents

Suggested Magical Stunts: Craftsman, Far Shot, Jack of all Trades, Precision Shot

The god Lugh, son of Belenus, is said to be skilled at everything, master of every art and craft. Amongst the Gaels, Lugh has replaced Belenus as god of the sun.

Many skilled craftsmen consider Lugh as a patron. Lugh is also a deadly shot with the sling. He is widely worshipped in the Celtic world. Many places, both in Britannia and elsewhere, are named after the god. The Romans identified him with Mercury.

Mabon

Suggested Magical Stunts: Bardic Knowledge, Bardic Protection, Biting Satire, Many Tongues, Song of Battle

Mabon is a god of liberty, music, knowledge and languages and the patron of bards. He was identified by the Romans with the god Apollo. Mabon is worshipped in Hibernia as a fairly minor god, the son of Oghma, the god of eloquence.

Manawydan ap Llyr

Suggested Magical Stunts: Blessing of the Sea God, Lodestone, Swift [for movement in water], Water Creature

Manawydan is a god of the sea and sailors and son of Llyr, the ancient god of the ocean depths. Manawydan is also worshipped by the Gaels, though to them he goes by the name Manannan ap Lir. He was identified by the Romans with the sea god Neptune.

The Morrigan

Suggested Magical Stunts: Aura of Fear, Diviner, Numbers are No Defence, Shape-changer, Second Sight

The Morrigan is a triple goddess of Hibernian origin. She is mainly seen as a goddess of death and violence. One form, Badb, the raven, represents war and slaughter. Macha, the wolf, represents vengeance. The final Aspect, Nemain, represents magic and prophecy.

Nodens

Suggested Magical Stunts: Blessing of the Sea God, Healing Touch, Far Shot, Water Creature

Nodens is a god associated with healing, hunting, fishing and the sea. He once lost his hand in a battle and had it replaced by an artificial one of silver wrought by the smith god Goffanon. Nodens is also worshipped in Hibernia, where he has the name Nuada Silver Hand. He was king of the gods there before his original hand was lost.

The centre of Nodens' worship in Britannia is the Kingdom of Siluria. The Romans identified him with the Greek healer god Asclepius. Dogs are sacred to him and kept in his temples, as they were to Asclepius in days gone by.

Sulis

Suggested Magical Stunts: Healing Touch, Hedge Magic, Second Sight

Sulis is a goddess of wisdom and healing, identified with Minerva by the Romans. The city of Aquae Sulis (Bath) is named after a spring sacred to the goddess. However, Aquae Sulis is now a Christian city and worship of Sulis is forbidden.

Veteris

Suggested Magical Stunts: Heroic Inspiration, Jack of All Trades, Rally, Scholar

Veteris is both a warrior god and a god of wisdom, leadership and prophecy. He was never identified by the Romans with one of their own gods. Nevertheless his worship became popular in much of their Roman army in Britannia before Christianity took hold.

Saxon Gods

The Saxons (and Angles and Jutes) are a pagan people, worshipping a pantheon of gods with different spheres of divine power. These gods are similar to the gods of the Norse. As with the Norse, many myths involve wars between the gods and the giants, but they are not identical. Just as is the case amongst the British, some Saxons are blessed by their gods, with special gifts and powers due to this special heritage.

Eostre

Suggested Magical Stunts: Healing Touch, Hedge Magic, Swift

Eostre is goddess of the spring, growth and prosperity. Her symbols are the egg and the hare. Eostre's festivals are held at the same time as the Christian festivals held to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. Some Christians in Saxon lands mix the Christian festivals and those to the goddess.

Frige

Suggested Magical Stunts: Belonging [magical jewellery or shapechanging cloak], Diviner, Elegant

Frige is the wife of Woden, chief of the gods. She is goddess of beauty, the earth and precious minerals. Frige also has the power of prophesy and is the patron of diviners. She is associated with the falcon. In myths she wears a magical golden necklace and cloak made of falcon feathers.

Hretha

Suggested Magical Stunts: Aura of Fear, Dark-Adapted Eye, Numbers are No Defence, Vanish

Hretha is a winged warrior goddess of death and winter. She flies invisibly over battlefields to harvest the souls of fallen warriors, conducting them into a glorious afterlife in the halls of Woden. The month of March is sacred to Hretha.

Seaxneat

Suggested Magical Stunts: Heroic Inspiration, Rally, Warband

Seaxneat is the mortal son of the god Wotan. He is held to be the ancestor of all Saxon kings and the origin of their royal blood. An oath made by a Saxon king in the name of Seaxneat is absolutely binding when made to another king of his blood, but is not seen as binding when made to lesser mortals.

Thunor

Suggested Magical Stunts: Beast of Burden, Magic Resistance, Skin Like Iron, Tough (can be taken more than once if supernatural)

Thunor is the god of thunder, strength and storms. He is also a warrior god, wielding a hammer that is capable of levelling mountains. Thunor is a popular god in many myths. He is the protector of mankind against such powerful supernatural beings as giants and dragons. Thunor's symbol is the hammer. Many Saxons wear hammer-shaped pendants as a protection against supernatural evil.

Tiw

Suggested Magical Stunts: Fighting Style [longsword], Heroic Charge, Melee Specialism [duels], Weapon of Vengeance

Tiw is the son of Woden and Frige. He is a mighty warrior, being god of the sword, single combat and the glory of heroes. He is the epitome of the warrior code, which involves bravery and loyalty to one's comrades. Tiw is the main god named at the funerals of warriors.

Wade

Suggested Magical Stunts: Beast of Burden, Blessing of the Sea God, Skin Like Iron, Tough (can be taken more than once if supernatural), Water Creature

Wade was not originally one of the gods, but rather a giant, who went to live with the gods as part of an exchange of hostages during a brief peace pact between the gods and giants. Wade remained with the gods after hostilities resumed, having married a sea goddess, Elen. Wade is now god of the sea and the coasts and patron of fishermen and sailors.

Wayland

Suggested Magical Stunts: Belonging [miraculous item], Craftsman, Rune Wizardry, Weapon of Vengeance

Wayland is the son of the sea god Wade. He is god of smithcraft and the manufacture of marvellous objects. During an attack by an outlaw giant king and his sons, Wayland was lamed and stranded on an island, albeit with access to a forge to make miraculous items for the king. However, the king's sons and wife also craved the products of Wayland's craft. They each individually visited the smith god in secret. Wayland gained his revenge by killing the sons one by one, impregnating the giant's wife and escaping on a pair of magical wings he had fashioned.

Woden

Suggested Magical Stunts: Rune Wizardry, Shapechanger, Planned Assault

Woden is god of war, rulership and cunning. He is the chief god of the Saxon pantheon. He sacrificed one of his eyes to discover the secret of the runes and the magic locked within them. In so doing, Woden became the patron of sorcerers as well as kings. Further, Woden is god of the gallows. Criminals who are executed by hanging are sacrifices to him.

Woden is always accompanied by two wolves and two ravens.

Yngvi

Suggested Magical Stunts: Fae-blooded, Lodestone, Scent Tracking, Second Sight

Yngvi is the god of fertility and wild places and protector of travellers and sailors. He is often portrayed riding a boar and wielding a sword. According to the Saxons, Yngvi is King of the Elves (the Fae).



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Chapter 10 - Dark Ages Britannia

Romans and Celts

Ancient Britain was a Celtic land that the Romans ruled over much of for hundreds of years. After Roman rule ended and the legions withdrew, the remaining culture on the island is now a mixture of Roman and Celtic, with some parts favouring one culture more than the other. Some still call themselves Roman, or Roman British, whereas others seek a return to the way of life before the Roman conquest. Both ways of life are threatened by the invading Saxons.

Broadly speaking, the outlook of many of the towns and cities is more Roman, whereas the rural outlook is more Celtic. This is not to say Roman culture never reached the countryside. Roman villas and their remains are dotted around the landscape, though now they tend to be in various stages of decay and disrepair. Even areas never directly ruled by the Romans are influenced by the old Roman culture.

Kings and Warriors

Following the end of Roman rule, Britain reverted to consisting of a number of independent kingdoms, each with their own rulers. However, one legacy of Roman rule, which never existed in ancient times, is the concept of the whole of the island of Britain south of Hadrian's Wall as a single realm.

Since the death of King Ambrosius Aurelianus there has been no high king of Britain, or Pendragon as he is termed. The realms of Britain have been at war with each other as often as they have been allied. There is no law or precedent for the establishment of a Pendragon as Ambrosius left no clear successor. Before him the Pendragon was Vortigern, no blood relation of Ambrosius', who invited the Saxons to Britain. In practical terms, what is needed to establish a Pendragon is the agreement of a sufficient number of individual kings. The support of the druids and of the Christian church also helps, though the two religions are unlikely to side together.

There is more of a process for deciding the ruler of an individual kingdom. The old way is for the most suitable person to be chosen from amongst the royal family when a sovereign dies or otherwise ceases to be fit to rule. The royal family, the nobles of a kingdom, consists of all descendants of the old ruler's great grandmother. Ruling queens exist as well as ruling kings. The decision as to who should rule is made by the nobles

and warriors of a kingdom. Most kingdoms no longer follow the old way, however, so succession is linear and the throne passes to a king's oldest legitimate son, or closest heir if that fails. In some cases a king's territory is instead divided amongst his surviving sons.

A king is not an absolute ruler, but rather first amongst equals, consisting of all the nobles and warriors of a kingdom. He is expected to lead by example. Besides ruling and making major decisions, one major duty of a king is hospitality. A good king is a generous one. Guests of a king are fed and lodged at a king's feasting hall. Traditionally any visitor to a kingdom may claim the right to be the guest of a king, though this is only the case within smaller realms.

In turn, a guest is expected to provide news and perhaps entertainment, usually a story. No weapons are allowed within a feasting hall. Any fighting is a gross breach of the laws of hospitality that can be severely punished. Customarily, disagreements which might escalate to violence are taken outside.

After the king, the most important people in the kingdom are his warriors. Warriors may be born to that role, or they may earn it. A warrior is no mere soldier. He provides his own horse and weapons as the wealth needed to do this is one of the requirements to hold such a position of high status. He fights through loyalty to a kingdom rather than for pay. Of course a good and wise king is generous, rewarding his warriors with gifts.

In many kingdoms, especially to those keeping the old ways, there is no shame to an unmarried woman assuming the role of warrior, though it is quite rare. The role of warrior is forbidden to married women, who have duties of rearing children and managing the home.

Warriors form the elite fighters and leaders in a kingdom's armed forces. They are expected to be able to ride as well as fight. Some are actually able to do both at the same time! Any cavalry in an army is drawn from the warriors. The cavalry are elite troops, able to rapidly reach anywhere on the battlefield and attack with thundering force. The majority of warriors prefer to fight on foot, possibly riding to a battle line before dismounting. Such warriors must inspire the foot soldiers they command and provide the strongest link in any shield wall. It's the trained warrior that knows when to hold and when to dare to break formation to attack.

The rank and file of a kingdom's forces are those who form the bulk of the shield walls. They are soldiers rather than warriors. Most soldiers are part-time militia, who mobilise only to defend their own lands and those of their lords. Others are paid to work as soldiers full-time. Most of these paid soldiers are still loyal to a particular kingdom, for all that they are not considered to have the same honour as a warrior.

However, amongst the paid soldiers, some are professional mercenaries, prepared to fight for a kingdom because of the pay rather than because of bonds of loyalty. Many warriors distrust mercenaries and their motives. Mercenaries tend to supplement the armies of most kingdoms that can afford it. These present times are troubled. Fighting is the main way that is left for many to make a living in war torn Britannia.

Soldiers and most mercenaries tend to be infantry rather than cavalry. There is more

uniformity in the arms of soldiers than there is amongst warriors. Most foot soldiers are armed with shields as well as weapons, principally the spear. The shield wall is the basic building block of armies and their deployment a vitally important part of military tactics.

Religion

Christianity

Religion is another source of division between Roman and Celtic and between the urban and rural populations. The main religion in cities and strongly Roman influenced areas is Christianity, which has almost completely replaced the old pagan Roman religion. Even once popular mystery religions, such as the cult of Isis, or the warriors of Mithras, now have comparatively few believers. However, the ancient pagan religion of Britain still thrives, especially away from the Roman cities.

Most of the core beliefs and structures of Christianity will be familiar to modern eyes. Each Christian city has a bishop in charge of all religious works, under whom serve a number of priests. A priest stands between man and God. Only a priest or bishop can perform the sacred functions of the church, such as giving communion, hearing confessions and giving penances and absolution, performing baptisms, marriages and funerals and giving extreme unction at the moment of death. There is no absolute requirement for a priest or even a bishop to be celibate, though this is often expected. Obviously, a priest is also expected to be pious, but a priest's personal sins do not negate his ability to perform his sacred functions.

There are also several monasteries in Britain, often built on isolated islands. The monks or nuns who dwell in these monasteries live ascetic lifestyles of solitary contemplation, unlike the mainstream church, they are outside of normal society. Monasteries have great importance as centres of education and literacy. In these secluded locations, books are cherished, copied by hand and often beautifully illustrated or "illuminated". Works of religious, historical, or philosophical importance are all kept in these centres of learning. Monasteries are the main repositories of literature and learning left in Britannia.

The most common form of Christianity in Britain takes influence from the philosophies and teaching of one monk, Pelagius, who was active in the first half of the fifth century AD. This philosophy, Pelagianism, emphasises free will, in particular freedom to choose between good and evil, denying the presence of original sin. The role of Christ is one who provides an exemplary example of doing good. Interestingly, Pelagian Christianity does not see Christianity as the only way to do good. It can happily coexist with other religions, such as the old pagan religion of Britain.

This is not to say that there is no religious friction. To the mainstream Catholic church based in Rome, Pelagianism is heretical. Back in the year 429, a bishop from the continent, Germanus of Auxerre, was sent to the island to win the people of Britain away from heresy and back to the universal Catholic faith. He met with a certain amount of success, with his work continuing to this day. The British church is now divided.

The Catholic church sees Christianity as the only way to redemption, taking a far more militant attitude towards the native British pagan religion. Worse, in parts of Britain where the two faiths have clashed, the pagan religion has become more radical, returning to the old ways of bloody sacrifice. Some in the church, especially those who have encountered the bloodier pagan ceremonies, view the ending of the native religion as an absolute priority.

The Old Faith

The Celtic religion of Britain acknowledges a vast pantheon of beings, responsible for both nature and Aspects of human affairs. The chief festivals held to honour these gods are at the turnings of the seasons: Beltaine, at the beginning of May, Lughnasadh at the start of August, Samhain at the beginning of November and the Midwinter Festival celebrated on December 26th.

The night before the festival of Beltaine, which is chiefly sacred to the god Belenus, fires are lit to purify the land from both war and winter to commemorate regrowth. Lughnassadh is the harvest festival, associated with both fertility goddesses and the god Lugh.

The festival of Samhain marks the boundary between the light and dark half of the year, the end of the harvest and the beginning of the winter. As a boundary between light and darkness, it is also a time when the dead are honoured and propitiated with sacrifices, usually in the form of a hunted animal, which is roasted and eaten. There is a pre-Roman Samhain tradition involving the hunting of a human captive, who was allowed to go free if he could evade the hunters for a night.

Finally, the Midwinter festival is sacred to Cernunnos. It is the last feast celebration before deep winter begins. Many domestic animals are eaten so they do not have to be fed through the winter. The Midwinter Festival is the one occasion when it is relatively common to eat beef. During the festival revellers, wearing animal masks, or with faces painted black, travel from house to house, stopping in for food and playing music or singing.

The priests of the old gods of Britain are the druids. The Picts and Gaels also have druids, though the gods they worship are slightly different. As well as being in charge of religious ceremonies, the druids are also sorcerers with powers to invoke the gods to bless and curse, to protect and harm, and sometimes to control the weather. Before the Roman invasion the druids were more powerful than kings, being the ultimate arbiters of justice and the source of education and knowledge. They remain figures of awe and sometimes terror.

Human sacrifice at major religious festivals, usually consisting of criminals and those taken prisoner in wars or raids, was once a part of the druids' religious ceremonies. The most spectacular of these sacrifices, at least according to old Roman writings, consisted of placing a living man inside a figure made of wicker and setting it ablaze, burning the unfortunate victim alive. The Romans broke the power of the druids. They continued under Roman rule as a lesser power, though the practice of human sacrifice was made illegal.

Now, with the Romans gone, some druids see an opportunity to rise again to their old positions of power. A few have even reinstated human sacrifice, though most now frown on this. Such practices are a further reason, and quite a compelling one, for those in the Catholic Church to seek an end to the Druidic faith.

Everyday Life

Clothing and Ornamentation

Typical clothing for men in Britain consists of trousers, a thigh-length tunic, leather boots or shoes and a cloak. The tunic and trousers are quite plain and tend not to be dyed, though the cloak is usually colourfully dyed and often embroidered. The cloak is fastened with a brooch, often depicting an animal.

Clothing for women consists of a tunic, girdle and shawl along with, for married women, an overdress fastened at the shoulder with a brooch. This apes the Roman rather than the Celtic style. For women who can afford it these clothes are colourfully dyed, with the overdress in a contrasting colour to the other garments.

Both men and women wear jewellery. Besides the brooches mentioned above, the most common items of jewellery are golden torcs, tight-fitting neck rings, decorated with knot work and arm-bands. Torcs are popular amongst the nobility and warriors often wear multiple arm-bands. A custom that exists in some parts of the country is for a warrior to be entitled to one arm band for each victorious battle. For a few families, those that trace their origins back to the Roman era, the head of the household wears a ring containing a setting of precious stone etched with a unique family design.

Some women, especially the rich, wear further jewellery dating back to the fashions of the Roman era. Such jewellery includes bracelets, earrings, hair pins and hair nets. However, such jewellery is frowned upon for men.

Tattoos are reasonably common for men, usually depicting animals associated with an individual's family or character. It is not usual for a man to have more than one or two tattoos, though they never mark the face or hands.

Food and Drink

A typical meal in Britain consists of bread, accompanied by vegetables or a vegetable broth. Typical vegetables include beans, pulses such as peas and root vegetables such as carrots and turnips. An alternative accompaniment to the bread is cheese. Fruit is also eaten, both fresh and dried. The most common fruit is the apple.

Meat also has an important place in the diet. Whenever noble guests are entertained, or a king provides hospitality, meat must be provided. Meat most frequently comes from domestic animals. In most settlements, cattle, pigs, sheep and geese are kept. The cattle are kept to provide milk and are only killed for food on special occasions or times of desperation. Sheep and geese are kept for their wool and eggs respectively as well as for meat.

On special occasions meat is provided fresh from the hunt. Boar, deer, game birds, hares and rabbit are all eaten. Hunting these creatures is as much a sport as it is a source of food. In the case of animals such as the boar it can prove to be a dangerous sport.

Fish and shellfish also form a part of the diet, especially in coastal areas. They are not as prized as they were in Roman times, lacking the status of meat. However, one left-over from Roman times is the use of a fermented fish sauce seasoning called garum. This is used amongst some wealthy families who still value the old Roman ways.

Most food is plain with little in the way of seasoning. Some wealthy households with deep Roman roots prepare more elaborate food incorporating vinegar, honey, herbs and spices into recipes. Such ingredients are imported, sometimes from great distances away and tend to be prohibitively expensive, especially in such troubled times.

The main drink in Britannia is beer, which is drunk by adults with most meals. Beer is provided as part of a host's hospitality duties. In the west country, cider is brewed and replaces beer as the main drink. Beer is drunk by the Angles and Saxons as well as the British, although the Jutes generally prefer mead, brewed from honey.

Wine is also much prized, though it must be imported, which makes it expensive. Most people do not drink wine undiluted, mixing with water as the Romans did. Fruit, herbs and spices are also sometimes added to wine.

Leisure and Entertainment

Most people of Britain, especially those of a more Celtic background, enjoy music and storytelling. As noted above, bards are much prized, both as entertainers and bringers of news. A good bard can sing, tell stories and play a musical instrument. They will have memorised a vast collection of songs and stories. Those that cling to the old Roman ways prefer readings, either of classical or new works. Some readings, especially of poetry, are accompanied by music.

Popular musical instruments include the flute, lute, harp and lyre. The last two were introduced to the country by the Romans and enthusiastically adopted by the Celts. Small hand-bells are sometimes used during dances. Trumpets and drums are also widely used, but more usually for military matters such as sounding a charge in battle or keeping rhythm during a march.

Another, more active, entertainment is chariot racing. In Roman times chariot racing was a major sport performed on racetracks, with significant prizes, crowds and money wagered on the outcome. It was popular with both the Romans and native Celts. The Celts used chariots as weapons of war before the Roman times and most of the best charioteers were British natives. The sport remains popular despite the end of Roman rule, but it has become more informal in nature. The race is usually along a particular outdoor route rather than on a formal racetrack. Both crowds and prizes are smaller even though more people participate as opposed to spectate. Gambling on the outcome of a chariot race is still common. Such wagers tend to be informal bets between individuals.

A number of gambling dice games are played, often in brothels and insalubrious taverns in the larger cities. As well as pure dice games, there are other gambling games involving

a combination of dice and board requiring a degree of skill. The most popular of these is tabula, which resembles modern backgammon.

Both commoners and nobles enjoy bardic performances or readings and the chariot races. It is generally seen as uncouth for nobles to gamble at dice or the game of tabula. A board game of pure skill popular with the nobility is known as latrunculi in Latin, or fidchell in Brythonic. Stories tell that this game is also played by the gods. Latrunculi is a game of military tactics, somewhat resembling modern draughts, with two types of pieces.

Kings and warriors enjoy hunting for pleasure and sport, rather than for food. The animals most prized by nobles are deer and boar. Smaller animals such as birds and rabbit (introduced into Britannia by the Romans) are left to the commoners. Such hunts tend to be group affairs, with prizes or gifts going to the one who first wounds the hunted animal and to the one who kills it. Large and small animals are hunted using dogs, both to scare the prey and to track it.

Deer and boar hunting is restricted to ceremonial occasions and in places that worship the old gods rather than Christ. A domestic animal is sacrificed to Cernunnos before the hunt begins. At the conclusion of a successful hunt, both the sacrificed domestic animal and hunted animal are cooked and eaten in a feast by those who took part, their servants and subjects.

Culture and Learning

Britain is in a period of intellectual decline. The greatest, most beautiful works of art are those left by the Romans. One who desires a magnificent villa will pillage such things as statues and mosaics left behind by the Romans as the art of creating work of such quality is now lost.

The engineering wonders of the Romans are beyond the knowledge of anyone in Britain today. The great roads, aqueducts, bridges, impressive public buildings and fortifications all gradually fade into ruin and disrepair. Literacy is once more in decline. There are few scholars who still study the old philosophers and poets, their understanding of the past is limited and few think to create anything new.

Even the magical knowledge of the druids is a shadow of what it was before the Romans came. There has been some progress in military science, particularly in the forging of weapons and the use of cavalry. The discipline of the Roman army has now largely gone. War is a constant threat due to both internal strife and raiders and invaders such as the Gaels and Saxons. In such fearful times the things in peacetime that enrich life and add to happiness are not only threatened, but often not valued. Worse, the invaders are frequently barbarians who destroy what they do not understand.

There is hope of eventual renewal. The Christian church seeks to preserve knowledge and literacy, for all that it believes that the end times are approaching. The oral traditions of the bards are flourishing, with new stories and epics being told as well as the old favourites. If what is important can be defended and peace forged, there might be a hope of cultural renewal in the future. But at present the hope is a slim one.

Other Folk

The Gaels

The Gaels, who come from Hibernia, are feared raiders and pirates in the west of Britain, especially near the coast. There are many Gael tribes and kingdoms, some on or near British shores. Most Gaels, however, primarily see Britannia as a target for raids.

The Gaels found on British shores are pagan, worshipping gods similar to those of Britain, though with slightly different names. Many of the Gael gods have British equivalents, while others are only gods of importance amongst the Gaels.

Some of the main pagan Gael gods are:

God or Goddess	British Equivalent	Notes
Brigid, The White Goddess	Brigantia	Triple goddess of the hunt, motherhood, the harvest and prophecy.
The Daghdá	None	Father and fertility god. Head of the pantheon.
Dian Cécht	None	God of healing. Responsible for replacing Nuada's hand.
Lugh of the Long Arm	Lugh of Many Talents	Similar to his British equivalent as the god who is good at everything, but is also god of the sun.
Manannan mac Lir	Manawydan ap Llyr	As in Britannia, the god of the sea.
The Morrigan	The Morrigan	As in Britannia, the triple goddess of war, slaughter, vengeance and sorcery.
Nuada Silver Hand	Nodens	A god of the war and the hunt. Ruler of the gods until he lost his hand, which was replaced by one of silver.
Oghma	Veteris	God of eloquence, persuasion and writing.

The bulk of Hibernia itself is now Christian. The druids have lost much of their power, both temporal and magical. Many of the raiders and settlers on the British coasts have left Hibernia because of the widespread adoption of Christianity.

Magic and the Gael gods

Those who have magical powers through worship of the Gael gods, such as Hibernian druids, have difficulty in most of Britannia, where the gods are subtly different, or in Hibernia itself, which is now Christian. They gain an Aspect, The gods are distant, which can be used against them by opponents for the usual Fate Point cost.

Gael magic users in the kingdom of Dyfed, and the islands of Ynys Mannau and Ynys Mon are exceptions to this rule.

The style of clothing amongst the Gaels is similar to that of the British, but both men and women wear trousers. An important part of dress is a woollen tartan cloak. The more colours there are in a person's cloak, the greater his importance. A peasant will usually have just one colour as well as the background. A skilled artisan might have two or three colours and a high king or druid as many as seven colours.

In war, the main Gael fighters are noble warriors, trusted by the king of the land. These warriors are reinforced by paid spearmen. The Gaels lack cavalry and fight on foot. An important part of combat strategy is the use of terror. Druids will curse the enemy and use their magic to spread fear. A piper will play the bagpipes, the drone of which inspires despair and horror.

The Picts

The Picts were once the great enemies of the Romans in Britain but circumstances have changed for them. Much of Hadrian's Wall (see page 186) is being reclaimed by nature and is falling by the wayside. They are now menaced by the Gaels. In many areas Pictish kingdoms have formed alliances with the nations of northern Britain.

The Picts are the final traces of the race that inhabited Britain before the Celts came to the island. The Celts have been in Britain a long time, well before the Romans. Pict culture is now essentially Celtic, their language a dialect of Brythonic.

Religion is of less importance to the Picts than to many other people. Most Picts follow the same Druidic religion as in Britain and worship the same gods. However, the druids never had the same social power amongst the Picts as they did in the rest of the Celtic world. Nevertheless their powers are still respected and feared. A few Picts have converted to Christianity in its Pelagian form. So far there is little tension between the new and old faiths.

Marriage status is also a personal matter amongst the Picts. Any couple that wishes to call themselves married may do so and there is no shame attached to illegitimate children. For this reason, laws of inheritance are traced exclusively through women rather than men. The ruler of a kingdom must be a male king, but his children do

not inherit. His successor must be traced through his female relatives rather than his descendants. When a king ceases to rule, his successor is typically a brother or nephew. In contrast to the British and the Gaels, the Picts make no distinction between warriors and paid soldiers. Every adult Pict should be trained to fight and those who do so for a living are warriors. Warriors gain much status and honour by devoting themselves to battle and glory.

Before battle, when time permits, Pict warriors paint themselves, or at least their faces, with blue woad, in order to intimidate the enemy. Some particularly brave or foolish Pict warriors have the habit of stripping naked before battle, all the better to terrify enemies even more. Going into battle in this way is not always suicidal as some warriors gain a degree of supernatural protection when they fight thus unattired (see the Woad Warrior Stunt on page 53).

Angles, Saxons and Jutes

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes are Germanic peoples menacing and invading the shores of Britain. All three have a similar language, culture and customs. The largest group of the three is the Saxons. In this section, we therefore write about Saxon culture and customs. The Angles and Jutes are very similar and most of what we say here also applies to them.

In the time of High King Vortigern, groups of Saxons were granted land in Britain in return for their services as mercenaries against others raiding the British shores; including other Saxons. Since then, more and more Saxons have been coming to Britain, both to raid and to settle. The Saxon territory has expanded to such a degree that British and Roman culture is threatened. In the Saxon held lands the older cultures have been all but obliterated. In these areas Britons are now subjects of foreign kings or, worse, enslaved.

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes are, like the British, divided into many different kingdoms. Saxon kings are all believed to be descended from Wotan, the chief god of the Saxon pantheon, through his mortal son Seaxneat. A king is principally a war-leader, expected to provide his people with opportunities for glory and plunder. A king who cannot do such, or who cannot defend his people, will not last long. The members of a royal family are called athelings. When a king dies, all athelings are eligible for kingship. There is no clear succession law, so athelings often fight for the throne, along with whatever followers they can recruit. Kingdoms which have grown large under a strong king tend to split into several parts when he dies.

After the kings and athelings, the most important people in Saxon society are the thanes. Athane is required to own enough land to support at least five families. It is a great honour to be counted amongst the thanes which explains their desire for land as well as plunder. Athane leads and is responsible for the lower classes, the churls, who live and work on his land.

Aside from matters of thanehood and kingship, women and men are equal in Saxon society. Saxon law is enforced by thanes and kings. The basis of Saxon law is the concept of wergild- compensation paid to the victim of a crime by the one who committed it. The

degree of compensation depends on a victim's status. More severe crimes are punished by mutilation or execution, as well as the payment of a wergild. In the case of execution, the wergild is paid from the condemned criminal's belongings.

The lowest class of Saxon society are the thralls. Thralls are slaves, either criminals who cannot pay the wergild for a crime, or those captured in raids. One need not pay wergild to a thrall as a victim of a crime, though thralls do have value as the property of their master. Thralls are typically used for manual labour. A thrall is fitted with a locked iron collar to show his or her status. Being a thrall is not necessarily for life. A thrall might be ransomed if captured, a wergild that led to slavery paid by another, or a thrall might be freed by his or her master.

In Saxon religion, a pantheon of gods are worshipped. These gods are closely related to the Norse deities, but are not identical to them. They are described on page 139. A major part of Saxon religious belief is that every man or woman has a wyrd, or fate and that this can be fought against, delayed, but never altered.

Saxons wear amulets around their necks to protect them from hostile magic and provide good luck. These amulets are typically made of animal teeth, bones or shells, and often carved with runes or symbols such as Thunor's hammer. Usually this belief in amulets is a superstition, but some such amulets are imbued by Saxon wizards with the power of the runes. These runes are also sometimes used for divination. The wizards who practice rune magic are almost the only literate Saxons.

A few Saxons practice another form of magic, that of shapechanging into the forms of various animals. Shapechangers often accompany war or raiding parties. Another specialist found in some war parties is the berserker: one who goes mad in battle and exhibits immense rage and resistance to injury (see the Berserker Rage Stunt on page 47). Berserkers are feared almost as much as they are respected by their comrades. It is not unknown for a berserker in their madness to attack friend and foe alike.

In battle, the Saxons are armed with a variety of weapons, mainly spears and axes. The rich are armed with swords. Most Saxons, men and women, carry a long dagger called a seax, though this is a tool as well as a weapon. Armour usually consists of a helmet and shield.

Age of Arthur Timeline

The default time for the start of an Age of Arthur series is the year 482. At this time Britain has no High King and is divided into numerous petty kingdoms. Without the general and king Ambrosius Aurelianus, the Saxon invaders seem all but unstoppable. A young warlord called Artorios or Arthur has come to the fore, leading his followers to victory.

Events in the timeline after the start of your game should be regarded as tentative, able to be changed by player character actions, or by spectacular successes and failures.

Date	Event
43	Roman invasion and conquest of Britain.
60	Attack by the Romans on the druids of Ynys Mon.
61	Revolt of Queen Boudicea of the Iceni.
360	The Huns rampage across Europe. The Picts and Gaels attack Britain.
381	Army of Magnus Maximus drives off the Picts and Gaels.
383	Magnus Maximus is declared Emperor of the West by British troops.
387	Establishment of Brittany, "little Britain", in Armorica.
388	Magnus Maximus defeated and killed by army of Theodosius I.
400	St. Ninian builds monastery in Galloway.
402	Stilicho withdraws legions from Britain for defence of Italy against the invading Visigoths. Devastating attacks by the Picts, Gaels and Saxons. The rulers of Britain are organised roughly into two factions: a Roman faction and a Celtic faction, favouring independence of Britain from the Empire.
406	Constantine III elected emperor by the remaining legions in Britain. He withdraws further troops to march to Gaul against the Emperor Honorius.
408	Assassination of Stilicho.
410	Alaric's Visigoths sack Rome, Emperor Honorius sends a further message to Britain saying that they must see to their own defence.
411	Around this time, the Pelagian creed of Christianity, preaching that there is no such thing as original sin and many paths to salvation, becomes popular in Britain.
425	Vortigern, leader of the Celtic faction in Britain, becomes High King.
426	St. Patrick starts mission in Hibernia.
428	Saxons led by Hengist and Horsa land in Britain. They are employed as mercenaries by Vortigern to guard against other barbarian attack.
429	St. Germanus of Auxerre sent to Britain to combat the Pelagian heresy.
438	Birth of Ambrosius Aurelianus, future leader of the Roman faction in Britain.
441	First Saxon revolt under Hengist and Horsa.
450	Birth of Myrddin.
451	Attila and the Huns invade Europe, stopped at the walls of Paris.

- 455 Start of Battles in Kent between Vortigern and Hengist.
- 460 Birth of Arthur. Ambrosius Aurelianus takes control of the Roman faction in Britain and leads the resistance to the Saxons.
- 462 Ministry of St. David starts.
- 465 Saxons take control of Kent. Mass migration of British aristocrats and city dwellers to Armorica.
- 469 Saxons massacre three hundred British leaders and nobles, including most of the Roman faction, at a "peace conference", possibly with Vortigern's connivance.
- 470 Death of Vortigern in battle with Ambrosius Aurelianus' forces. Ambrosius Aurelianus becomes High King.
- 471 Forces led by Ambrosius Aurelianus defeat Hengist in battle for the first time.
- 477 The Saxon Aelle's south east campaign. Ambrosius Aurelianus falls ill, perhaps cursed.
- 479 Ambrosius Aurelianus defeats Octa, son of Hengist, in battle at Verulamium. However, he and his brother Uther both die. Britain breaks down into quarrelling petty kingdoms.
- 480 Arthur leads British forces against the Saxons led by Aelle.
- 482 Default starting time for an Age of Arthur series.
- 487 Conquest of Armorica by the Franks.
- 488 Arthur unveils the Sword of Albion and is declared by his supporters to be High King. Other British kings rebel, led by Lot of Gododdin and his wife, Arthur's sister, Morgan.
- 490 End of King Lot's rebellion. Lot swears fealty to Arthur.
- 495 Battle of Mount Badon, major defeat of the Saxons.
- 497 Disappearance of Myrddin.
- 500 Arthur's victories against the Angles.
- 516 Mordred rebellion.
- 517 Battle of Camlan, fatal wounding of Arthur.
- 530 Cerdic captures Isle of Wight.
- 556 Cynric defeats the British at Barbury castle.

Britannia

In The Age of Arthur



Kingdom Capitals

Ruin

Town

Point of Interest

Roman Road

River

Marsh

British Kingdoms

Cymric

Pictish

Invader Kingdoms

Gaels

Germanic

The Kingdom of the Angles

Canterbury

Chichester

Venta Belgarum

Stonehenge

Aquae Sulis

Corinium

Glevum

Verulamium

Camelodunum

Venta Icenorum

Ratae

Viroconium

Caer Pengwern

Mathrafal

Caer Deganwy

Yr Wyddfa

Dinas Emrys

Caer Rushden

Lindum

Danum

Mancunium

Vinovia

Luguvalium

Din Eidyn

Inbhir Nis

The Antonine Wall

The Wall of Hadrian

Oceanus Germanicus

Oceanus Britannicus

Oceanus Hibernicus

Dal Riata

Dal Fiatach

Ynys Mannau

Ynys Môn

Gwynedd

Dyfed

Lis Castell

Caerfyrddin

Caerleon

Isca

Dumnoniorum

Ynys Witrin

Durnovaria

Tintagel

Boscawen Ring

Dinsul

The Franks

Chapter 11 – Gazetteer of Britannia and some nearby lands

Britannia is a mist-shrouded magical island of rolling hills, deep dark forests, good farming lands and the fading remnants of the Romans who settled here out on the furthest frontier. All of the descriptions in this gazetteer are for the year 482, the default time for the Age of Arthur setting. It is possible to set games at an earlier or later date, but in this case some of the information here will need to be adjusted.

The descriptions focus on the key rulers of the lands and their ambitions to help fuel the stories for your games. For each kingdom, city and other location, there is a list of possible Aspects, which may, if appropriate, be used in Tests that happen in that place .

A Historical Note

The entries in this gazetteer are based, sometimes more loosely than others, on bits and pieces of local history about the places concerned, along with elements of the broad Arthurian and related legends, along with a dose of fantasy and whimsical invention. All the details here are not all historically accurate, even when there are comparatively few overtly fantastic elements in the write-up.

The modern equivalents of the places described here are given in brackets. These names are provided just for ease of reference and for your own further information gathering. The modern names would not be used by characters in the setting.

Map

We have included all these places in a map of Britannia, found on page 156. A full-sized colour version of the map is available via the Wordplay Games website.

Petty Kingdoms

Armorica (Brittany)

The Kingdom of Armorica, in north-west Gaul, has long had ties to Britain. Queen Elaine is the cousin of King Gerontius of Dumnonia. Her husband, King Ban, also has ties to Britain as he was once a close ally of High King Ambrosius Aurelianus. Ambrosius' nephew, Arthur, has spent time serving as a captain with Armorica's military. Elaine's family is more prestigious than Ban's. They are co-rulers and Elaine has as much power as her husband.

Armorica has been an independent kingdom since it rebelled against Roman rule following the withdrawal of the legions from Britain and much of northern Gaul. Armorica's situation on a peninsula means it is easily defended from barbarian attacks, whether from the Visigoths and Huns who swept into Gaul, or from the Saxons raiding the southern and eastern shores of Britain. A number of refugees have come to Armorica, both from Britain and nearby regions of Gaul, swelling the population. Ban and Elaine welcome the refugees, especially if they have useful skills. Armorica has the resources to provide for them in their current numbers. In the long run this influx of people will help to boost the kingdom's strength. That said, there are times when food has been running low. Many of Ban's councillors oppose this policy, meaning that not everyone in Armorica is as welcoming as the King and Queen.

A further reason Armorica is safe from barbarian conquest is a secret pact made by Ban's grandfather with the fae queen, Vivien of Lyonesse. Any potential invaders find themselves beset by bad or even disastrous weather. However, this pact has a price. Each generation, Queen Vivien is allowed to take away one child of the royal family for her own purposes. Some of these nobles, now grown to adulthood, can still be found in the Kingdom of Lyonesse.

The last child to be taken by Vivien was Ban and Elaine's only child, Lancelot, who was brought up in Lyonesse in ignorance of his heritage and without memory of his parents. For their part, Ban and Elaine are unaware of the pact and believe Lancelot to have drowned.

There are threats to Armorica. The Frankish king Clovis I, the third ruler of the Merovingian dynasty, is a dominant force in Gaul. He lusts to conquer the north-western peninsula, famed for its riches. He has made an agreement with Antemes, Ban and Elaine's seneschal, promising to install him as governor of the city in return for his help. Further, the pact with Vivien the Enchantress is under threat. The Fae Queen has recently released Lancelot into Britain. If his parents find out he was taken by Vivien, which is only a matter of time, they will surely seek revenge.

Aspects: Promises to the Fae, Not sure where the next loaf is coming from, There's a storm brewing

Cameludunum (Colchester)

Since the death of High King Ambrosius Aurelianus, the city of Cameludunum has been independent and not part of any larger nation. Full details can be found in the next section.

Dumnonia (Devon)

The Kingdom of Dumnonia grew from an earlier Roman district of the same name. Culturally it is a blend of Roman and British, continuing links across the seas. Indeed, the king of Dumnonia, Gerontius ap Erbin, looks more to the continent and what remains of the Roman Empire than to the rest of Britain.

At the capital, Isca Dumnoniorum, the king sponsors a small merchant fleet to gather such exotic goods as wine and spices. These rare goods to Britain are then transported elsewhere into Britannia. For this reason, King Gerontius is sometimes termed Gerontius the Fleet Owner.

Dumnonia is a Christian kingdom. Unlike most of Britain it adheres to the Catholic rather than the Pelagian form of the faith, thanks in part to King Gerontius' fondness for continental culture. This means that paganism is not tolerated in Dumnonia. The Catholic missionary against the Pelagian church, Lupus of Troyes, is based in Isca Dumnoniorum. Lupus is an important advisor to the king, sitting high on his council. A forceful personality, he completely dominates the bishop and the local religious authorities.

Aspects: Links across the sea, Exotic wines and spices, Burn the heretic!

Dyfed

The Kingdom of Dyfed lies in south-west Wales. Many settlers, including the current royal family came to this area from Hibernia with the support of the Roman Emperor Magnus Maximus (locally known as Macsen Wledig), who paid them with land to defend that part of the coastline from other threats. This sort of policy was standard in the late Roman Empire and was copied, rather disastrously, by High King Vortigern in his dealings with the Saxons.

In any event, Dyfed is as much Hibernian as British. Goedelic is spoken there more than Brythonic, especially by the rulers. The people of Dyfed are settled rather than pirate raiders, resenting such raids as much as anyone else living on the shores of Britain. However, they do have an arrangement with some of those who come from Hibernia, ensuring that they are left alone, whilst raiding takes place elsewhere. The main threat from Dyfed is the fact that it is expansionist, with numbers of would-be settlers arriving in the area and seeking land.

Until recently, there were two kings in Dyfed and two royal families, one being the native British king, the other being the Gael leader, who took the title Protector. However, the last Protector, Triffyn Farfog, married Gwledyr, heiress of the British kings. The newly crowned King of Dyfed, Aeryl Lawhir, is the first to inherit a unified kingdom. Much

of the expansionism of Dyfed is due to Aergyl's ambition and that of his father, fuelled by the waves of new settlers.

Aspects: Gael rulers, Newly unified kingdom, New lands for new settlers

Ebrauc (Yorkshire)

The realm of Ebrauc corresponds roughly to modern day Yorkshire. It's capital is the city of Eboracum, where the post-Roman rulers can trace their lineage back to the Roman Emperor Magnus Maximus (called Macsen Wledig in much of Britannia). They still call themselves the Kings of Northern Britain, despite the now limited size of their domain.

Ebrauc is hedged in by Angle settlers and invaders, but so far has resisted conquest. However, it needs help, which the king, Einion ap Mor, is too proud to ask for. He still considers himself rightful ruler of the neighbouring British kingdoms, though this claim is not taken seriously by anyone outside of Eboracum.

Aspects: The Angles will take us, A proud and stubborn king, Remains of the Kingdom of Northern Britain

Gododdin

Gododdin is the most powerful of the northern British Kingdoms. Lying between the Walls of Antonine and Hadrian, it was never fully conquered by the Romans. For much of its history it was a Roman ally. The great Welsh leader, Cunedda Wledig was part of the royal house of Gododdin.

By tradition, the kings of Gododdin spend time in each of the main settlements of the kingdom. The largest settlement, the town of Din Eidyn (which corresponds to modern Edinburgh) is where the current king, Lot ap Luwddoc, spends most of his time.

The people of Gododdin are British rather than Pict, though King Lot is half Pict, through his mother, a princess of Orkney. He rules both the Kingdom of Gododdin and the Kingdom of Orkney. In order to make peace with Lot, High King Ambrosius Aurelianus arranged a marriage between Lot and his niece, Morgan Le Fay. However, under Pictish law, such things as royal rule pass through the female line and more usually through a niece than a daughter. Morgan Le Fay feels she has a good claim to be High Queen of Britain now that Ambrosius Aurelianus and her father Uther are dead and King Lot desires to be High King. The people of Gododdin and many Picts support this claim.

Morgan Le Fay dwells away from Gododdin, on Orkney, with her younger children. Although she and her husband are not estranged, they seldom see each other. The eldest child of Lot and Morgan is Gawain, now in his teens, who lives with his father. Gawain already shows signs of becoming a formidable warrior, but he is headstrong and stubborn, unwilling to blindly follow his parents' lead in things. In particular, he is not fully convinced of the claim to high kingship of Britain, though he keeps this to himself as he is still fiercely loyal to his family. The younger children of Lot and Morgan seem at present to be more biddable.

King Lot of Gododdin and King Urien of Rheged are cousins and the two kingdoms have a friendly relationship. As King Lot is from the older branch of the family, he might ultimately expect King Urien to acknowledge him as his overlord, but he is waiting until his ambitions are further developed to push this point. King Urien is currently unaware of such intentions and would certainly resist them

For all that he is driven by ambition, King Lot would not make an overly poor choice for High King. The problem is the lengths he would go to in order to realise that ambition and Morgan Le Fay even more so. Morgan has already bargained with the Queen of Air and Darkness (see page 181) for both magical and temporal power. This terrifying connection alone would be enough to make it disastrous for Britain, were her ambitions ever realised.

Aspects: Land between the Walls, Mightiest of northern kingdoms, Politics and ambition

Gwynedd

Gwynedd is an extensive but not heavily populated kingdom, spanning a wild area of northern Wales. Giants and even a dragon can be found within the mountains of Gwynedd, as can isolated pockets of Fae. It is a thoroughly pagan place, where Christianity has so far made few inroads.

The Kingdom of Gwynedd was founded by Cunedda Wledig, grandson of Padarn Beiruth of Gododdin, who united the quarrelling tribes of the area and arranged for its defence against Gael and Saxon raiders. The Saxons at one stage reached far enough to the west to threaten the kingdom. He also managed to kill or drive off some of the worst of the monsters found in the area, though others still remain.

The current king is Osmail ap Cunedda, who is thus a distant cousin of King Lot of Gododdin and Urien of Rheged. Currently, Osmail is engaged with a war against the Hibernian pirates of Ynys Mon. He is undertaking this fight not just because of the menace they pose to his land and his people, but because he feels it is sacred duty to the gods of Britain to reclaim the ancient Druidic home. Initially, Osmail had wide support for this war amongst his people, but his support is waning as the war drags on with no sign of a victory.

Arthur, King Ambrosius Aurelianus' illegitimate nephew, was brought up in Gwynedd and considers Cunedda Wledig to be a foster father.

Aspects: Monsters in the wilds, A thoroughly pagan place, Never ending wars

Inbhir Nis

Inbhir Nis is the most powerful of the Pictish Kingdoms, apart from Gododdin, which probably doesn't count as truly Pictish. Inbhir Nis occupies much of the highlands of Caledonia, or at least those parts not occupied by the Great Caledonian Forest. It was built from the conquests of the legendary King Maelchon.

The current ruler of Inbhir Nis is King Brude, who can trace his lineage back to Maelchon through the matrilineal line. He has a troubled kingdom. The people are scattered

over a wide area and communication between settlements is poor. There are no sizable towns or cities. The largest is King Brude's capital, the hill fort of Craig Phadrig (corresponding to the modern day city of Inverness) and even there the population is counted in hundreds rather than thousands.

The Gaels have settled on the islands to the west of Inbhir Nis and are raiding the shores. On another border lies the Great Caledonian Forest which, at the hands of the winter Fae, is actually expanding into the kingdom. Brude is still young and is confident that he is up to the challenges facing his rule. King Lot of Gododdin has offered help, but the help comes with the price of Brude swearing allegiance to Lot, effectively making Inbhir Nis a vassal state to Gododdin. The young king is too proud to do that. He will find his own way, part of which involves finding safer lands for his people to the south, even if that means taking such lands from another folk. He also schemes to acquire the magical chariot of Morgan Mwynfawr (see page 71), which he has traced to lying in Queen Mab's castle of glass in the Great Caledonian Forest.

Aspects: Pictish Kingdom of the Highlands, Trouble on two borders, Scattered population

Kent

Kent is the longest-established of the Angle, Saxon and Jute kingdoms. It is the home of the majority of Jutes who have settled in Britain and ruled by King Oisc, son of Hengist. The capital of Kent is the city of Canterbury, which is prospering in its own way under Jute rule.

Oisc has sworn alliance to King Aella of Sussex and supports him in his aim to become high king of Britain.

Aspects: Most established Anglo-Saxon lands in Britannia, Kingdom of the Jutes, Alliance with Sussex

Kernow (Cornwall)

Uther Pendragon's eventual wife, Ygraine, was at one time married to King Cador of Kernow, with whom he and his brother, High King Ambrosius Aurelianus, were at war. Uther lusted after her and persuaded the sorcerer Myrddin to magically disguise him as King Cador. In this disguise, whilst Cador was away leading his troops in battle against Ambrosius, Uther visited queen Ygraine in the night and satisfied his lustful passions.

King Cador died in battle that very same night. Arthur was born nine months later and Uther and Ygraine married. Uther never admitted to being Arthur's father as doing so would acknowledge his deceit. Arthur grew up away from his father and the court of his uncle, in far-off Gwynedd.

The King of Kernow is now King March ap Cador. Since Uther's death, March has done his best to keep Kernow independent, pagan and out of the politics and battles of the rest of Britain. The kingdom's geographic isolation and potential wealth based on its extensive tin mines make this aim potentially achievable.

However, a ruling by Ambrosius Aurelianus, means that Kernow has to pay a large tribute of tin to neighbouring Dumnonia in exchange for military protection. Much tin from Kernow is traded unofficially, often to Dumnonia's rivals or enemies, especially with Dyfed and Siluria and sometimes as far afield as Hibernia.

Aspects: Independent and pagan, Tin Mines, Hated tribute to Dumnonia

The Kingdom of the Angles

The Kingdom of the Angles is a recently established domain on the east coast of Britain, north of Londinium and Cameludunum. It does not yet rival the more established Jute kingdom of Kent, or the Saxon kingdoms on the south coast, but it is still expanding as more settlers arrive and the invaders push further west.

The leader of the Angles is King Wehha, who is a shapechanger. Wehha's enemies say he spends as much time in wolf form as he does in human form. Whether or not that is true, Wehha is greatly feared and uses this to maintain control in his lands. Amongst Wehha's warriors are other shapechangers who go into battle in wolf form, each of them leading a pack of mundane wolves.

Aspects: Recently established, Rapidly expanding, Kingdom of the wolf

Lindum (Lincoln)

Like Urbe Legionis and Cameludunum, Lindum is an independent city and not part of any larger kingdom. Thus, it is listed here, though full details can be found in the next section.

Powys

Powys is a powerful kingdom occupying eastern Wales and much of what is now England that lies between Wales and the Midlands. The royal house of Powys, the house of Mathrafal, consists of the descendants of High King Vortigern and Princess Seviria. Seviria was the daughter of Macsen Wledig: the British name for the Roman Emperor Magnus Maximus.

Because of these illustrious ancestors, the kings of Powys still tend to feel that they have the right to high kingship of Britain. However, Vortigern is now widely seen as a traitor throughout the rest of Britain, so the high royal blood of Powys does not count for as much as they might assume.

The new king calls himself Ambrosius Caninus when he wishes to appeal to the Romans, and Cyngen Mathrafal ap Cadell when he wishes to appeal to the Celts. In the space of a few years his father and two elder brothers died in mysterious circumstances, leaving Cyngen as king. Besides his descent from High King Vortigern and Emperor Magnus Maximus, Cyngen is a distant relative of High King Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon, hence his assumed name. He uses it to fuel his desire for popularity, comparing himself to a much-loved king.

Cyngen did not only murder his way to the throne, but rules Powys as a war-like tyrant. Those who threaten Cyngen's power or security on the throne find themselves brutally

murdered. King Cyngen wars frequently against other British kingdoms, not so much for the sake of conquest (though he does desire to conquer Urbe Legionis), but for plunder. Cyngen knows that he does not have sufficient loyal men to hold the territory he takes. One of Cyngen's favourite war stratagems is to raid another kingdom currently involved in conflict elsewhere, usually against the Gaels or the Saxons. Many say that the richness of the surviving Roman architecture in Urbe Legionis is the main reason Cyngen desires to conquer that city.

This strategy has made Cyngen's army, though not his country, rich. As a result of the constant supply of plunder, the army is loyal to Cyngen, making his hold on the throne more secure. Cyngen has also donated a good sum of captured wealth to the Christian church. This is already starting to pay off. Some of the more obsequious priests in Powys are already calling him Cyngen the Renowned or Cyngen the Generous.

Aspects: In the thrall of a tyrannical king, Army made rich by plunder, Gifts to the Christian Church

Rheged

Rheged is one of the most powerful Kingdoms of northern Britain, occupying much of what is the modern day North West. Rheged also controls much of the Wall of Hadrian and the surviving fortresses along it.

The kingdom is notable for its comparatively friendly relations between its royal family and the Fae. The king of Rheged, Urien ap Cynfarch, is married to a Fae lady, Brimisent. Brimisent is one of the winter Fae and so theoretically a subject of the Queen of Air and Darkness. This marriage grants the king magical power. He received as dowry the Platter of Rydderch, which can produce any item of food its holder desired. Urien's feasts are consequently renowned throughout Britain. There will, inevitably be a long-term price.

King Urien is fiercely independent and reluctant to acknowledge any High King. His father did swear fealty to Ambrosius Aurelianus. His shores are troubled by Gael raiders, though at present he is able to withstand them. Urien is not expansionist in policy, happy to take others under his kingdom's protection in return for fealty. He is uninterested in the welfare of the rest of Britain, only concerned for his own kingdom's safety and prosperity and will do whatever it takes to guarantee that.

Urien is a cousin of King Lot of Gododdin. The two neighbouring kingdoms have friendly relations despite the Roman wall between them. Despite this accord the two kingdoms rarely work together.

Aspects: Shores troubled by raiders, Ties to the Winter Fae, Friendly relations with Gododdin

Siluria

The Kingdom of Siluria spans a wide territory on both sides of the River Severn. It includes three large towns: Glevum, Caerfyddin and Caerleon. As such it is one of the most populous of the kingdoms of Britain. Caerleon is the capital. Siluria is mainly pagan rather than Christian. The most important god in Siluria is Nodens, who is

patron of the royal house and a god of healing, hunting, fishing and the sea. Dogs are sacred to Nodens and a stylised dog is the emblem of the kingdom.

The ruler of Siluria is Caradoc Freichfras (meaning Strongarm) ap Ynyr. The name "strongarm" was given ironically, though Caradoc took it as a compliment, for the king is a weak and corrupt ruler who gives positions and responsibility to personal favourites and those who present suitable gifts rather than to those with ability. He is also vulnerable to flattery and the appearance of loyalty, demanding obsequious praise from all those who appear in his court, apart from close personal friends.

King Caradoc finds the process of actually governing his kingdom rather tedious, preferring to spend his time watching athletic displays and gladiatorial fights between prisoners in the amphitheatre at the capital, Caerleon. Unfortunately for Caradoc, he only has the resources to put on a limited number of these fights. The people of Caerleon, especially those who want the favour of the king, are entertained by these displays of "Roman culture", as the king calls them sarcastically.

At present, Siluria seems a strong place because of its size and population. However, it suffers from raids from the neighbouring Kingdom of Powys, amongst others. The king seems incapable of making decisions to defend his realm's borders. With such weak rule in such dangerous times the kingdom's continued existence is uncertain.

Aspects: Weak and Corrupt King, Appearance of Strength, Incapable of Defending Borders

Sussex

Sussex is a new kingdom, ruled over by the powerful Saxon king, Aelle. Aelle has fought many battles in Britain, against the British and against other Saxons. So far he is undefeated. He has further territorial ambitions. In the last few weeks, Aelle has begun to call himself Bretwalda, a Saxon title for the king of all Britain, roughly equivalent to the native Pendragon. It remains to be seen which, if any, of the other Saxon kings acknowledge this title and whether Aelle's career of conquest will have further success.

Aspects: Undefeated in Battle, Desire to rule all Britannia, Lands for the Saxons

Urbe Legionis (Chester)

The city of Urbe Legionis and its surrounding countryside is an independent kingdom in its own right, though a small one. It is described fully in the list of towns and cities in the next section.

Ynys Mannau (The Isle of Man)

Ynys Mannau, or Manannan's Isle, lies between Hibernia and Britain. According to legend it was once the home of the sea god called Manannan by the Gaels and Manawydan by the British. Whether or not the legend is true, the island contains a large temple to the sea god, surrounded by a sacred grove attended by druids. The druids took up residence early in the Roman occupation, after fleeing Ynys Mon. The island provided a place to hide and regroup and the Romans never set foot on its shores.

The order of druids who still live in the grove remain largely hidden, despite many of them being magically powerful. They see both Christianity and barbarism inevitably dominating mainland Britain, so prefer to stay away from such affairs, preserving their lives and faith in a safe haven. The grove and temple are in the middle of Fae woodlands that cover the northern half of the island. The Fae stay out of human affairs, though they hunt those who enter their woods, even to gain access to the temple. Their presence provides another layer of protection for the druids.

The most senior and powerful of the druids is the Druidess Birog. She is not technically their leader, but her prowess means that her opinions are listened to. She will interfere with matters in the outside world only when it is a dire necessity. Sadly, such affairs occur more frequently than she would like.

The southern part of the island is less strange and magical, consisting mainly of fishing villages. The people of the villages are a mixture of British and Hibernian in origin. Most are ignorant of the existence of the druid sanctuary to the north. The island is a stopover point and temporary base for groups of Gael pirates raiding the west coasts of Britain.

The ruler of the people of the southern part of the island is King Gromer. King Gromer is one of the few who knows about the druids. Birog removed a Fae enchantment that the king had fallen victim to, which gave him the head of an ass. At their request and out of gratitude he keeps their presence secret.

Aspects: Hunted in the Fae woodland, Druid sanctuary, Stop-over for Hibernian pirates

Towns and Cities

Many of the settlements described here are part of the kingdoms described in the previous section. If this is the case for a settlement, we list the greater kingdom within square brackets after the settlement's name.

Aelia Castra (Alchester)

Located at a strategic crossroads, Aelia Castra was a small Roman town. The town is now abandoned in the face of repeated Saxon attacks. So far, the Saxons have not occupied the area.

Under a nearby hill, marked by a stone monolith, is a barrow. The barrow is known as Goffanon's Smithy. It appears empty, but any horse left alone outside the barrow for the night is freshly shod in the morning. Similarly, broken tools and weapons if left there are repaired. It is unknown who or what does the repairing. Some say the god Goffanon himself, hence the name, whereas others say that Fae artificers repair the items or place a dangerous glamour upon them. One thing is known, that no work is done if there are observers and, so far, all attempts to sneak a view of the working have always failed.

Aspects: Ghost town, Power of the old gods, Whispers in the trees

Aquae Sulis (Bath) [Dumnonia]

Before the Roman invasion of Britain, the town of Aquae Sulis was simply a shrine to the goddess Sulis, based around local natural hot springs with healing properties. One who bathes in the waters of the springs is miraculously healed of all wounds, however dire. The Roman town grew around the shrine and Sulis was identified with the Roman goddess Minerva. The springs and shrine grew into a Roman bath complex, with adjoining temple. The baths retained the healing properties of the original shrine. The fame of Aquae Sulis spread, bringing pilgrims from far afield in search of healing.

As Roman rule in Britain declined and the country and Empire in general were increasingly faced with threats, the baths fell into disrepair. The flow of pilgrims to Aquae Sulis gradually dried up. Some pilgrims continue to come and use the hot springs. A number of residents have remained in Aquae Sulis.

The site of the sacred springs has been occupied by Christian priests from Isca Dumnoniorum. These priests worship at the miraculous sacred springs and no longer allow pagans access to them.

Aspects: Healing waters, Roman grandeur, We don't bathe your kind

Benoic [Armorica]

Benoic is the capital of the Kingdom of Armorica. It is a Roman city, almost perfectly preserved from the height of the Roman Empire, even more so than anywhere in Britannia, including Caerleon and Urbe Legionis. It features a monumental gate in its solidly constructed walls, an amphitheatre and heated public baths.

Near the centre of the city is a large Roman villa which serves as the court of King Ban and Queen Elaine. Benoic is a city of culture with musicians and poets flocking to the court. It is also a place of great learning. Scholars seek out the king's vast, if uncatalogued, library.

Aspects: Rome preserved, Everything you can know if you can find it, City of culture

Caer Deganwy [Gwynedd]

Caer Deganwy is a wooden fortified town built on a massive rocky outcrop. It is the capital of the Kingdom of Gwynedd and the site of the court of King Osmail. It is also small enough that the king will put up visitors personally in his own feasting hall. King Osmail prides himself on his hospitality and generosity. As a result of which there are constantly interesting visitors coming and going.

Aspects: It's a long way down, Hospitality and generosity, Comings and goings

Caerfyddin (Carmarthen) [Siluria]

Caerfyddin was once the Roman town of Moridunum. Today, many of the Roman buildings have been demolished and replaced. A large amphitheatre remains, often used for musical performances. Such performances also take place at a Romano-Celtic temple to the god Mabon, a god of liberty and music, who was identified by the Romans with Apollo.

Mabon is also the patron god of the town. Caerfyddin remains staunchly pagan. No churches are permitted to be built there, though there are a small number of Christians amongst the town's population. As the patron god perhaps indicates, Caerfyddin is an important town to bards and musicians and a good many bards receive their training there.

Caerfyddin's other claim to fame is that it is the birthplace of Myrddin, the most powerful practitioner of magic in Britannia (see page 232). Caerfyddin is near the border between the Kingdom of Siluria and the Kingdom of Dyfed, and is often troubled by raids.

Aspects: Staunchly Pagan, Troubled by raids, Bardic training

Caerleon [Siluria]

The fortress of Isca Augusta served as the base for the second legion during the Roman conquest of Wales. It remained in use as a base until Roman rule ended in Britain. A significant civilian population had grown up around the fortress and remained when the legions departed.

The town is now called Caerleon, or the City of the Legion. The Roman fortifications are still surprisingly well-maintained and the city is an impressive sight. It now serves as the capital of the Kingdom of Siluria.

The amphitheatre is still intact and, while not impressive as that of the city of Urbe Legionis, is still used for its original purpose of hosting entertainment. King Caradoc Freichfras stages athletic contests, chariot races and gladiatorial combats between prisoners in the arena.

Aspects: Sshh it's only a model, Death and glory in the arena, Well maintained fortifications

Caer Pengwern [Powys]

Caer Pengwern was once the capital of the Kingdom of Powys, before King Cyngen moved his court to the Roman city of Viroconium. It is based around a hill fort that existed since pre-Roman times. With the breakdown of civilisation following the Roman withdrawal, the hill fort became more heavily used, becoming the hub of a fairly prosperous town and the centre of the wool trade in the region.

Although Caer Pengwern is no longer the capital, it is home to some of the richer people of Powys, including a few who were influential before King Cyngen took the throne.

They are now gathering supporters for a scheme to replace the king with one they can directly influence once more.

Aspects: Centre of the wool trade, Former Capital of Powys, Plots against the King

Caer Rushden [Ynys Mannau]

Caer Rushden is a castle of gargantuan proportions in the middle of the fishing villages on the south of Ynys Mannau. It was once the abode of giants. The druids of Ynys Mannau defeated these giants but did not, or could not, kill them. The giants are still imprisoned deep beneath the castle. They take a lot of feeding.

The ruler of the southern part of Ynys Mannau, King Gromer, has made Caer Rushden his home. despite the fact it is still only imperfectly adapted to those of mere human size. The king feels, correctly, that its magnitude impresses his subjects and visitors.

Aspects: Gargantuan proportions, Compensating for something, Prison for angry giants

Cameludunum (Colchester)

Cameludunum was the first Roman town in Britain. It was built on the site of an earlier Celtic settlement. For a short time it was the capital of Roman Britain, until Boudicea's revolt, when the unwalled city was all but destroyed and the capital shifted to Londinium. It was rebuilt with heavy walls and fortifications.

Later in Roman history, Cameludunum became moderately prosperous. It was the only place in Britain where the fine and much prized red pottery known as Samian Ware was produced. The expected features of a Roman town including a forum, basilica and theatre are found there. Cameludunum also contains a large number of intact pagan temples, most originally dedicated to Roman gods and now to their British correspondents. It is one of the few cities in Britain where Christianity has a weak hold. Such Christians that are present tend to be Pelagians and tolerant of paganism.

Following the Roman withdrawal and the Saxon attacks, the walls of Cameludunum made it a natural place to centre local defence of the area. The city was ruled by Uther, brother of King Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon and served as a major military base. Thanks to his efforts, Camuludunum and the surrounding area are still defended against the marauding Saxon invaders.

The current ruler of Camuludunum is Duke Nathaladiodus, an ageing warrior once in Uther's service. He wants nothing more than the true high king to come again to Britain and save the country. The Duke has no ambitions to further his own position, despite ruling an independent city, content to wait for others to draw together the kingdoms and return Britannia to the British. Nathaladiodus considers himself both British and Roman, holding on to many Roman ways. He is a pagan but welcomes all religions as long as they don't disrupt the running of the city.

Uther was buried in the vaults of the temple to Cernunnos in Cameludunum. Interred with him was the Horn of Bran, a magical drinking horn that fills with whatever drink its owner desires.

Aspects: Religious toleration, Heavy walls and fortifications, Treasures with the dead

Canterbury [Kent]

Before the Romans came, the city now known as Canterbury was the main settlement of the Cantiaci tribe of south-east England. It was rebuilt by the Romans and given baths, a theatre, a forum, fortified walls and a temple to the war god Mars. The temple was later dedicated to the god Mithras and now stands empty. The Romans named the city Durovernum Canticorum.

When the Romans left the country the city, known as *Caer Ceint* to the British, was simply abandoned, intact, but crumbling. When the Angles, Saxons and Jutes came to the Britain, the Jutes occupied the city. They renamed it Canterbury and it became the capital of Kent. The ruler of Canterbury and the Kingdom of Kent is Oisc, son of Hengist.

The Roman buildings of Canterbury are decaying, only crudely restored, but still in use. One exception to this is the Mithraeum. The Saxons and Jutes who have dared to enter the old temple have emerged terrified, raving of strange visions. Some have lost all grip of the world and descended into madness. The crumbling buildings actually bely Canterbury's prosperity. It is the most established of the Saxon cities with a growing trade in textiles and leather goods.

Aspects: Crumbling buildings, Healthy trading city, Saxons rule here

Chichester [Sussex]

The site of the town of *Noviomagus Regnorum* on the south coast was an important landing point during the Roman conquest of Britain. *Noviomagus Regnorum* entered a decline when the Saxons began raiding the south coast, even before Roman rule ended in Britain, though it was never completely abandoned as it was solidly fortified, with stone walls over two metres thick.

Despite this, *Noviomagus* was conquered by the Saxon leader Aelle three years ago. He renamed it Chichester after his son, Cissa. Chichester now has around 1500 permanent inhabitants and is the capital of Aelle's new kingdom of Sussex. Of course, the population of Chichester was once far larger. Many of the Roman buildings stand empty as the Saxons prefer not to use them both out of taste and wary superstition, erecting their own dwellings instead. Many of the Roman buildings have been torn down, though the outside walls have, if anything, been strengthened since Aelle's rule began.

Aspects: Solidly fortified, Shell buildings, A growing vibrant place

Corinium (Cirencester) [Siluria]

Corinium was once one of the most important and largest cities of Roman Britannia. The forum is impressive by Britannia standards, second in size only to that in Londinium. The beautifully carved marble basilica still stands, along with statues of many of the old gods. In the latter times of Roman Britain, Corinium was extremely wealthy and luxurious. Many fine mosaics and sculptures remain throughout the city.

Corinium has been heavily fortified both against the Saxon menace and attacks from other British Kingdoms. Traces of Corinium's old glory remain. It is still a centre of the stone carving industry and one of the few places where skilled sculptors are trained.

Further, Corinium is the one place in Britain where an old-fashioned Roman education is still available. Most of the citizens are literate in Latin. Tutors work there, providing education in Roman law and rhetoric as well as in basic literacy. The people of Corinium tend to be proud of the city's heritage and scared that others will take it from them. As a consequence many are hostile towards visitors.

Aspects: An old fashioned Roman education, Hostile to non-Roman visitors, Mosaics and sculptures

Danum (Doncaster) [Ebrauc]

The village of Danum is located at a bridge over the River Don, on the road between Eboracum and Lindum. It is the site of pottery manufacture and a small Roman fort, which was abandoned for many years when the region was peaceful. Despite the presence of the fort, the people of Danum were always a rural Celtic population, never adopting Roman ways.

The fort has recently been reoccupied by the Kingdom of Ebrauc as a defensive outpost against Angle incursions. It is commanded by King Einion's son, Eliffer, who has recently been severely wounded in battle with the Angles. His wound is cursed or poisoned and refuses to heal.

Aspects: Defence against the Angles, Get your pots here, The old ways

Din Eidyn (Edinburgh) [Gododdin]

Din Eidyn is the largest town in the kingdom of Gododdin and one of the residences of the king. It is a market town with a fair sized trading and fishing fleet. At the centre of Din Eidyn is an impressively strong hill fort atop a granite hill. The fortifications were built to protect the people of the town in an ancient war against the winter Fae.

Aspects: Impressively strong hill fort, Trade and fishing fleet, The Winter Fae will not forget

Hill Forts

A hill fort is a defended settlement based at the top of a hill. They were widely used in the country before the Romans came to Britannia and are still fairly common. Indeed, in parts of the country they have made something of a come-back in the post-Roman era. The defences in a hill fort surround a hill's summit, typically consisting of earthworks, wooden stockades and ditches. In some more modern hill forts, the wooden stockades are replaced by stone walls.

Durnovaria (Dorchester) [Dumnonia]

Durnovaria was originally a small garrison fort established during the Roman conquest of Britain. The army moved away as the conquest was consolidated and Durnovaria became a market town for the local area. It grew to be a centre for local shale, marble and pottery. A training school for mosaic artists open in the area and those trained in the school travelled throughout Britain and northern Gaul. An aged master mosaic artist, Rhæus Pictor, still works from the school, though there is little demand now for his work.

A stone circle just outside the settlement was converted by the Romans into an amphitheatre. The amphitheatre still has some effect on magic, adding a +1 bonus to any magic Tests within three days of the spring and summer solstices and also the autumn and winter equinoxes.

About seven miles north of the town is another ancient magical site. Etched into the hillside is an outline of the god Camulos, a naked man two hundred paces long carrying his symbolic club and lion-skin, much the same as the Roman Hercules. Sacrifices to the god made at this site can bring fertility, or the god's blessing in a coming battle. In rules terms both of these blessings provide an Aspect that can be used at the usual cost.

Aspects: An echo of ancient magic, Camulos watches over us, Find mosaic craftsmen

Eboracum (York) [Ebrauc]

The city of Eboracum was once the largest city in the northern part of the country. It was the headquarters of one of the three legions based in Britannia. When Britannia was split by the Romans into two administrative regions, Londinium remained the capital of the south whilst Eboracum became the capital of northern Britannia.

In later Roman history several Roman emperors, most notably Constantine the Great and Magnus Maximus, were proclaimed Emperor in Eboracum. Since the departure of Rome, Eboracum has maintained much of its culture and has immense pride in its history. The post-Roman rulers of the city style themselves the Kings of Northern

Britannia and trace their lineage from Emperor Magnus Maximus, calling him by the British version of his name, Macsen Wledig.

Though in early days, the rule of the King of Eboracum encompassed much of the north of the country, the domain of the current king, Einion ap Mor, is the realm of Ebrauc, which roughly corresponds to modern day Yorkshire.

Despite Einion's pride in his heritage, the city of Eboracum is in decay. The Roman constructed barriers that protected the city from flooding from the rivers Ouse and Floss, between which it lies, have collapsed. The lower parts of the city have been abandoned due to periodic flooding, though the central legionary fortifications remain. Like so many other Roman cities in Britain, Eboracum is a shadow of the dynamic and cosmopolitan place it once was.

Aspects: A place for emperors and kings, You'll need a boat to get over there, A shadow of former glory.

Glevum (Gloucester) [Siluria]

Glevum is a prosperous market town at the crossing of the River Severn, surrounded by rich farmland. A number of Roman villas can be found in the land near Glevum, a few of which are still in good repair. They are inhabited by families and their servants who cling to the Roman way of life. The ruler of Glevum, Lord Honorius, also considers himself a part of the Roman tradition. Honorius received his position directly from King Caradoc of Siluria. He does little actual governing, preferring to leave the city to its own devices. So far, the city continues despite this, though banditry, base thievery and other crimes are on the increase.

Glevum is home to a group of witches, known colloquially as the Nine Hags of Glevum. The Hags belong to an ancient tradition worshipping the goddess Cerridwen, the crone Aspect of Brigid. At major festivals the Hags have brought back the old pre-Roman ways of making human sacrifices in Brigid's name. The Hags do not make it widely known of this practice and the people of Glevum are too fearful of their power to prevent the practice. They claim to be responsible for the fertility of the land around Glevum, demonstrating powers to control the weather. As a result, the Hags have a privileged status, frequently receiving gifts either in exchange for services, real or perceived, or by those who fear them or wish to honour them.

Aspects: In the thrall of the Nine Hags, Remind me who the king is? Rich and prosperous.

Isca Dumnoniorum (Exeter) [Dumnonia]

The capital of Dumnonia, Isca Dumnoniorum, like many such towns in Britain, grew from the civilian settlement around a Roman legionary fortress. The Roman forum and basilica have been demolished to make way for a Christian church and graveyard. Parts of the town are crumbling, with buildings standing empty. An aqueduct that once supplied water to the entire settlement has partially collapsed. The population is smaller than it once was so the water supply is adequate.

Despite its fading appearance, Isca Dumnoniorum is beginning to thrive again. The ruined Roman buildings are slowly being destroyed and replaced. The city is an important trade centre. King Gerontius' large trade fleet is based there, maintaining links with continental Europe, both Armorica and places further afield. Isca Dumnoniorum's markets are bustling. It is the best place in Britain to find exotic goods such as wine and spices as such goods most frequently make their way to Dumnonia first before being transported elsewhere. For this reason King Gerontius is sometimes termed Gerontius the Fleet Owner.

Aspects: Bustling market, Wine over water, A hub of trade

Lindum (Lincoln)

Before the Romans came to Britannia, Lindum was a settlement by a deep pool. The Romans conquered it and the surrounding area, building a fortification on an overlooking hill. As the area became more settled and the borders of Roman Britannia were pushed further north, the fortification became a civilian settlement for retired legionaries.

Lindum grew into a major flourishing settlement and local capital, with access to the sea granted by both the River Trent and the River Witham. The aqueduct supplying water to the city is still intact, as is an octagonal fountain amongst the public buildings. The slopes of the hill between the old fortress and the River Trent are the commercial centre of the town. The forum situated there is surrounded by equestrian statues. Across the river are extensive textile workshops, which maintain the city's prosperous status. The public baths are still in use. The way of life in Lindum remains largely Roman.

There are temples to the gods Belenus and Lugh and a Christian church dedicated to St. Paul. The Pelagian bishop at the church tolerates the pagans and the pagans ignore the Christians. Many in Lindum see no contradiction in attending both the church and the temples, petitioning both Christ and the old gods to keep Lindum safe from the forces ravaging much of Britain.

The truth is a little more complex. Lindum's safety is by no means guaranteed despite the intact fortified wall and standing army. Blecca, the ruler of Lindum, calls himself a Prefect rather than a king, in the style of one appointed by Rome. By instinct Blecca is isolationist, making no military alliances with other realms of Britain. He is now known to habitually pay off those who might consider attacking the city. So far, Lindum can afford this policy. Would be raiders have found it more profitable to threaten and be paid off, than to attack. Some of those so paid have, in turn, deterred other would-be attackers in order to preserve their own threatening status to the city. It is only a matter of time before this policy fails. When it does Lindum is likely to find itself without allies.

Aspects: Bath time, Keeping every god happy, Without allies

Lis Castell [Dyfed]

Lis Castell is the new royal residence of the Kings of Dyfed. King Aergyl arranged to have the residence built to commemorate the union of the British and Gael lines of

kingship of Dyfed. Lis Castell is a purely Celtic settlement, dominated by the King's Hall. This impressive structure owes nothing to typical Roman or post-Roman architecture, following the traditionally built timber halls of the Britons. The same is true of several nearby newly constructed hill forts that owe allegiance to Dyfed.

Aspects: Royal residence, Built properly using the old ways, A flurry of hill forts

Londinium (London)

Londinium was established as a merchant city early in the Roman occupation of Britain. It was built where the River Thames is narrow enough to bridge but deep enough for sea traffic. Londinium became the capital following Queen Boudicea's revolt, when the old capital, Cameludunum, was virtually destroyed.

Following the Saxon invasions of the area, Londinium was all but abandoned. The superstitious amongst the Saxons are reluctant to enter the great city with its daunting and still intact Roman buildings, including temples to both Roman and non-Roman gods. The largest remaining temples, though empty and unused, are dedicated to Isis and Mithras. Londinium also boasts other great buildings including a large crumbling amphitheatre and the largest forum north of Italy. The forum is no longer used, a hulking ghost to a previous age. The Governor's Palace in Londinium was once noted for its beautiful gardens, pools and mosaics. The mosaics are now defaced and the pools and gardens choked with weeds and refuse.

A few wealthy Roman families still maintain villas in the south-east of the city, holding to purely Roman ways, protected from the Saxons by a mixture of superstition, hired guards and in some cases sorcery. However, Londinium is an empty and depressing place, full of the shadows of past glories.

There is still treasure in Londinium, despite much that has been looted by Saxons brave enough to enter the city. The Governor's palace once contained a large library containing a range of classical works on both the arts and the sciences. In the latter category are detailed accounts of Roman technology and architecture, which would be of immense practical benefit in the hands of a skilled engineer with resources, potentially providing the key to restore some of the material glory of the vanished Roman civilisation. There are also books of sorcery and prophecy.

Londinium is a dangerous place. Many of the Roman families do not look kindly on what they see as intruders. It is a rite of passage for Saxon warriors to go into the city and return with something valuable. Needless to say, the Saxons tend to enter the city in groups rather than alone.

Aspects: Shadows of past glories, Daunting and empty, Hidden treasures

Luguvalium (Carlisle) [Rheged]

Luguvalium is the capital of the Kingdom of Rheged. It is a walled Roman town, the only one in this part of Britannia, found at the confluence of three rivers. It was originally built to supply the troops on the Wall of Hadrian. The Wall and the Luguvalium are within sight of each other on a clear day.

The town was named in honour of the god Lugh, who was patron of the local Carvetii tribe before the Romans took over. With the end of Roman rule the local people have dispensed with worship of the Christ god. Lugh and the other British gods have been restored to their rightful place. Worship of Epona, as well as Lugh, is important in the town.

At the height of Roman power in the area one thousand cavalrymen were stationed in Luguvalium. The cavalry units did not leave when Roman rule ended in Britain and they still form the core strength of the kingdom of Rheged's army.

Aspects: Walls of Roman stone, Old gods restored, Stables and cavalry might

Mancunium (Manchester) [Rheged]

The farming town of Mancunium once housed a fortress manned by a cohort of lightly armed Roman auxiliary soldiers recruited from amongst the British natives, but the fortress and most of the town was abandoned when the Romans left Britain. The fortress is now partially in ruins. The town is reduced to the size of a small village. Mancunium marks the southernmost point of the kingdom of Rheged.

A small number of soldiers from Rheged have recently reoccupied the still usable parts of the fort as a potentially useful bastion against problems such as raiders from the Kingdom of Powys.

To the east of Mancunium are a number of forests inhabited by both summer and winter Fae. These two groups of Fae are known to war with each other. The people of the Kingdom of Rheged are sometimes involved in these wars. In particular, King Urien's Fae wife, Brimisent, is one of the winter Fae from these forests. Urien has been granted powers from the winter Fae in exchange for a future promise of help against their summer brethren.

Aspects: Bastion against raiders, Partially in ruins, Wars of the Fae

Mathrafal [Powys]

Mathrafal is a recently built hill fort with natural and earthwork defences reinforced by secure stone walls. It was founded by the last king of Powys before King Cyngen took the throne. The function of Mathrafal is to serve as a safe retreat and haven in the case of an emergency. The hill fort has a large area within its walls, comparatively little of which is currently occupied. Those who built Mathrafal felt sure that it would be an important defensive site in the future.

Aspects: Secure Stone Walls, Safe Retreat and Haven, Largely Unoccupied

Ratae (Leicester) [Powys]

The city of Ratae, or as it was once known more fully, Ratae Corieltavorum, began as a fairly poor settlement on the road between Lindum and Isca Dumnoniorum. However, Ratae rapidly grew to become known as a centre for the manufacture of glassware, metalwork and objects carved from horn. A number of large villas, some with fine mosaic

floors, remain from the era of prosperity, as does the aqueduct providing both drinking water and water for the bath houses.

Today Ratae is nominally part of the kingdom of Powys, but much of it has been effectively looted by King Cyngen to provide ornamentation for his capital of Viroconium. In particular nothing remains of the old temples in the city, only a small Christian church can be found in the city. The superstitious say that it is was the displeasure of the gods following the looting of the temples that caused the fire that destroyed the town basilica and forum.

Ratae is not really properly defended, only a small militia keep watch. The towers in the town walls are largely unmanned. It is only a matter of time before the city falls to an invading force.

Aspects: Thoroughly looted, Displeased gods may strike again, Not properly defended

Tintagel [Kernow]

Tintagel is a hill fort set on a spur of land that juts out into the sea. It has grown into a walled market town, with a Roman-style fortification at its centre. This fortification was constructed recently, by the late King Cador, in imitation of similar Roman forts.

The town is capital of the kingdom of Kernow, described in the previous section. Travellers and adventure seekers pass through Tintagel seeking out the magical land of Lyonesse (see page 183) and the rumoured gold, treasures and magic that lie there.

Aspects: Wild seas all around, Fortification in the centre, Gateway to Lyonesse

Urbe Legionis (Chester)

Originally, Urbe Legionis, meaning City of the Legion, was a legionary fortress built by the Romans as they advanced north during the Roman conquest of Britain. The fortress is significantly larger than the other legionary fortresses of Britain, being one of the major military and administrative centres of the country.

The fortress occupies a strategic site on a sandstone bluff, overlooking a bridge over the River Dee. The river Dee is navigable as far upstream as the city. The harbour there provides access to the sea.

As well as the fortress, Urbe Legionis was the site of a major civilian settlement. When Roman rule officially ended in Britannia, large numbers of Romans, including soldiers, remained there. Urbe Legionis is still one of the most important cities in Britannia and the one which retains the most Roman influence. It was the capital of High King Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon. Now, the ruler of the city is King Agricola, who favours Roman dress, manners and cuisine. The language of Agricola's court is Latin, not Brythonic.

At the core of his military force, Agricola maintains a number of soldiers trained to fight in the style of Roman legionaries. These legionaries, unusually for Britain, are armed uniformly with Roman-style armour and weapons but lack a little in the old Roman discipline. Enemies laugh at these uniformed "toy soldiers" until they meet them in battle and recognise that, in the right conditions they can be formidable.

The king has no personal territorial ambitions beyond keeping Urbe Legionis and the surrounding territories safe. He is surrounded by threats and seeks alliances where he can. Agricola also seeks to find a match for his only child, Guinhwyfar, both in order to cement an alliance and to find a suitable future ruler for his small kingdom. Guinhwyfar is very beautiful and a string of noble and opportunistic suitors have visited the court of Urbe Legionis seeking to prove their lineage and worth to win the hand of the princess.

One threat to the city are the Hibernian raiders marauding from the west. Another threat comes from King Ambrosius Caninus of Powys, a fearsome conqueror. In Agricola's eyes Caninus is as bad a threat to civilisation as any foreign barbarian. Worse, Ambrosius Caninus views himself as heir to the great Ambrosius Aurelianus and views the city as a rightful part of his own territory.

As mentioned above, Urbe Legionis is still an important place in Britain. The amphitheatre is huge, large enough to seat 10,000 people. In Roman times the amphitheatre was used for legionary training as well as hosting games. Now, as well as a training ground, the amphitheatre's size makes it a traditional gathering ground for times when kings gather from all over Britain to debate matters that affect the entire country. Since Ambrosius' death no agreement has been reached in any debates. It is clear that anyone who seeks to unify Britain would need the city's support.

Aspects: Harbour and passage out to the sea, Is this Rome?, Win her hand and win a kingdom

Venta Belgarum (Winchester)

The Roman town of Venta Belgarum was established at the site of a Celtic hill fort. It grew to become a local capital and the fifth largest city in Britain. It has, however, been in decline for some time. The drainage system has long-since collapsed, requiring the population to concentrate in higher and drier parts of the town.

This decline was temporarily reversed when High King Ambrosius Aurelianus used Venta Belgarum as his southern base in his wars against the Saxons, giving the city much needed repairs and strengthened defence works.

The population of Venta Belgarum is still pagan. The main religious site is a temple to Brigid, Romanised in the form of the three goddesses Artemis, Juno and Minerva. The goddess Epona is also important here. On a nearby hill is a vast chalk outline of a horse, which commemorates the goddess.

Venta Belgarum is ruled over by Melwas, King of the Belgae, once a loyal subject of Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon. Melwas is rapidly losing his territory in the face of the Saxon settlements and raiding warriors to the south and east of the city.

Aspects: High and dry, Brigid watches over us, The Saxons are coming

Venta Icenorum [The Kingdom of the Angles]

Venta Icenorum was once the capital of Queen Boudicea's Iceni tribe, which rebelled against the Romans long ago. After Boudicea's revolt Venta Icenorum was reduced in size to a small market town.

The town has recently been overrun by the invading Angles and most of the original inhabitants have fled. Outside the town there is a large temple complex to the victory goddess Andraste. The complex seems empty to the Angles, but the fires within are kept burning by someone, or something.

Aspects: Angles now control here, The flames of victory are still burning

Verulamium (St. Albans)

Verulamium was a tribal capital before the Romans came. Under Roman rule the town grew to a good size with a basilica, forum and theatre. It was, however, abandoned around thirty years ago in the face of overwhelming Saxon settlement and raids. The Saxons did not occupy the town.

The abandoned settlement was the site of Ambrosius Aurelianus' last battle against the Saxons, in which Hengist's son, Octa, was defeated. In the battle both Ambrosius and his brother Uther died.

Aspects: Ghost town, Memories of battles won and lost, Ready to be reclaimed

Vinovia [Ebrauc]

Vinovia was a small Roman fortress guarding the road where it crosses the River Wear between Eboracum and Hadrian's Wall. It serves a similar function to this day, albeit for the Kingdom of Ebrauc rather than the Empire of Rome. Those based in the fort spend their time fighting both Saxon raiders and bandits, who attack the traffic on the road.

A civilian settlement surrounds the fortress. Parts of the fortress, including the extensive bath-houses, have been opened up for civilian use. The way of life in Vinovia has always been very much Roman, with comparatively little immediate influence from the native British culture. Even now much of that tradition remains. Some people of Vinovia regard the small town, not much more than a village really, as one of the last outposts of civilisation.

As a way-stop on what was a major road, Vinovia is known for its hospitality. Very fine lodging is available at a price and, despite the small size of the town, the finest of wines are still imported from the continent for those who stay there. Indeed some travel to Vinovia just to sample such fine beverages.

Aspects: Last bastion of civilisation, I'll drink to that, Very fine lodging at a price

Viroconium (Wroxeter) [Powys]

Viroconium was once the fourth largest city in Roman Britain. It stood empty for some years before the current king of Powys, Cyngen, moved his court there and made the city his capital. He has vastly enriched the city with the products of raids on neighbouring kingdoms. Although the amphitheatre and basilica in Viroconium were demolished before King Cyngen's reign and many of the Roman buildings have fallen into a state of disrepair, there is also much new construction and restoration fuelled in part by stolen statues and even mosaics.

Other new constructions in Viroconium include military quarters and reinforcements to the fortifications. As King Cyngen has built up his power by raiding, he needs a strong army to continue this and a base of strength to deter others from attacking him in their turn.

Aspects: Building site, I'm having all this knocked through, Swords for hire welcome

Ynys Witrin (Glastonbury) [Dumnonia]

Long ago, Joseph of Arimethea, who was responsible for introducing Christianity to Britain, visited Ynys Witrin bearing the Holy Grail. He placed his staff, which once belonged to Jesus Christ, into the ground and from that spot immediately sprouted the sacred hawthorn tree. Hawthorns typically flower but once per year. The hawthorn at Ynys Witrin flowers twice per year, every Christmas and Easter, regardless of the movements of Easter in the year.

Since then, Ynys Witrin has been a gathering spot for Christian pilgrims. It is now the site of a Christian abbey, the most powerful and prestigious in Britain. Despite being a part of the Kingdom of Dumnonia, which has converted to Catholicism, the abbey follows the Pelagian tradition. It is only a matter of time before a Catholic abbot is appointed. For now, the abbot is Dunstan, who was Saxon by birth. Dunstan is both kindly and wise, preaching tolerance and forgiveness of one's enemies, especially in these troubled times.

The abbey has an extensive library. Its records contain many secrets, such as the possible location of the Holy Grail and the way to reach the Fae realms of Lyonesse (page 183) and Avalon (page 180). There are skilled healers amongst the monks of the abbey and many who value learning. It seems to be sheltered and protected from many of the troubles of the outside world.

Ynys Witrin is on the lower slopes of a hill, simply known as The Tor, which is surrounded by fenland. This fenland sometimes floods. On the Tor once stood a hill fort, which was destroyed in the Roman invasion of Britain. A monolith has since been placed on the summit. For those that know the rites, the summit and the monolith are the magical gateway to Avalon, the Fae realm of King Gwynn ap Nudd.

Aspects: Christian and pagan holy site, An extensive library of lore, Gateway to other realms

Other Places

Some of the places described here belong to territories claimed by a particular kingdom. In this case, we state the kingdom in square brackets.

Avalon

Avalon is a hidden Fae realm that can be accessed from the summit of the Tor at Ynys Witrin. This realm is inhabited by the summer Fae and ruled by King Gwynn ap Nudd. In Avalon, all wounds are healed and even mortals never age or sicken.

One can only enter or leave Avalon with King Gwynn ap Nudd's permission, or using certain rituals hidden in the abbey of Ynys Witrin. Gwynn ap Nudd is fond of inviting, some may say collecting, fair women and skilled warriors. One can only leave with Gwynn ap Nudd's permission, which is almost never granted. It is his practice to keep those he favours too highly. The king takes such pride in his much loved collection of people, he simply wouldn't be without any of them.

Aspects: Never age, All wounds and sickness healed, Face the peril

Boscawen Ring [Kernow]

Boscawen Ring is a stone circle similar to Stonehenge, but smaller in scale. Boscawen is sacred to the god Mabon and is a special place for bards rather than druids. Within the ring all performance skills gain a +2 bonus. Bards gather at Boscawen Ring to celebrate the four major festivals of the year, or when they want to impress with an exceptionally good performance.

Aspects: Stones that have seen the ages, Resonating with song

Cadair Idris [Gwynedd]

Cadair Idris is part of the same mountain range as Yr Wyddfa, described below. In a surprisingly comfortable cave high in the mountain lives Idris, a wise giant, famed for his knowledge in poetry, astronomy and philosophy. Idris also has considerable magical skills. He is a hermit, but fond of visitors and civilised conversation, most unlike his more brutal brethren who also live nearby. These giants revert to type and attack travellers without discrimination.

Idris is a useful source of information, especially about obscure or forgotten things.

Aspects: A cave with all the comforts, Lost knowledge imparted, Giants are looking for you

The Caledonian Forest

Large parts of Britannia north of the Wall of Antonius are covered by a great forest. The forest is dense and dark to such an extent that the brave Romans, when they first saw it, were struck with terror.

This terror was not irrational. The Great Caledonian Forest is the main home in Britain of the winter Fae. These powerful beings can call down mist and cold while they viciously hunt humanity. The only people who can pass freely through the forest are those of the Picts who have made suitable pacts with the Fae.

In the heart of the forest is Caer Wydyr, the castle of glass. This 'centre' of the forest sometimes moves from place to place, but always appears the same. Caer Wydyr is the court of Mab, ruler of the winter Fae and Queen of Air and Darkness herself. Within the castle are a number of magical treasures, some originally of Fae making, some not. The most notable of these are the Chariot of Morgan Mynfar (page 71), which allows rapid travel over any terrain and the Ring of Elenud, which makes the wearer invisible.

Queen Mab has no love for humanity. She has many schemes to bring about their downfall that have run patiently for decades. Mab views the Fae Kingdom of Lyonesse and its ruler, Vivien, as her great enemy. The Fae Queen's followers include giants, scheming Fae nobles, bloodthirsty Fae brutes and beasts who like nothing better than chasing down mortal intruders inside their forest.

The most powerful force at Mab's disposal is the Wild Hunt, a band of thirty mounted Fae warriors and wolves, led by an antlered Fae noble called Herne the Hunter, worshipped by some as an avatar of the god Cernunnos. The steeds and wolves in the Wild Hunt can run through the air as easily as on the ground. The Wild Hunt are amongst the few Fae under Mab's command who can freely leave the forest, which they do to pursue the Queen's enemies and retrieve for her things or people she wants. When there are no other pressing missions the Wild Hunt will choose a victim to pursue and kill for the sake and joy of hunting.

Rumours persist that Queen Mab and the sorceress Morgan Le Fay have a pact. Perhaps this pact is to grant the sorceress more power at some inhuman cost, or perhaps it is more subtle. Either way, such a pact, if it exists, is unlikely to be good news for the rest of Britain.

Aspects: Dense dark and full of terrors, Court of the Winter Fae, The Wild Hunt are about

Dinas Emrys [Gwynedd]

When High King Vortigern attempted to build a tower on the hill of Dinas Emrys, he found that every night it fell down. Vortigern's druid counsellors advised him to sacrifice a fatherless child to propitiate the powers beneath the hill. Myrddin (page 232), whose father was an anonymous Fae, was selected for this purpose.

The boy Myrddin, however, was gifted with the power of divination. When he was brought to the site he revealed that the problem was due to a dragon confined beneath the hill in a subterranean lake. Not fully believing or disbelieving the boy, Vortigern and his men agreed to spare Myrddin's life on condition he dealt with the dragon.

Myrddin spoke to the dragon, coming to an arrangement where he freed it in return for a once-only offer of aid. He then supervised the king's men in digging a big enough hole in the hill for the dragon to escape. The lake beneath the hill is still the dragon's home, but it is no longer trapped.

Aspects: They said I was daft to build a tower on this hill, Dragon's home, Subterranean lake

Dinsul (St. Michael's Mount) [Kernow]

Dinsul is a granite island just off the coast of Kernow. It is united with the mainland by a man-made causeway that is passable at low tide. It has been the site of an isolated monastery ever since the archangel Michael, according to legend, appeared to local fishermen.

The monks of Dinsul are obsessed with learning. A good many books have been taken to Dinsul to be preserved from parts of Britannia and nearby Gaul that have fallen to barbarism. The monks believe that their good work is to preserve culture, many spending their time making copies of rare books. Other monks travel in order to obtain such works for Dinsul.

Aspects: Granite island, Passable at low tide, A hoard of books and stored knowledge

The Isle of the Dead (Portland) [Dumnonia]

The Isle of the Dead is connected to the mainland by a long low land bridge. The bridge is always guarded, for it is said that on the Isle, the veils between the lands of the living and the dead are very thin indeed. Attempting to evade the guards and approach by sea is hazardous for the currents around the island are treacherous and it is surrounded by shallow rocky reefs that can tear the bottom from an approaching boat.

In fact, the island is the home of Avalloc, a mad old druid and prophet who can summon the ghosts of the dead to speak, provided he has their largely intact skull. In his time on the island, Avalloc has amassed a collection of hundreds of skulls from both the recently dead and those who have been departed for centuries. Amongst his collection are a few particularly prized skulls including Boudicea's skull. The skulls sit everywhere in the filthy cave that Avalloc calls a home and the druid knows the name and position of every one.

Thus Avalloc has access to vast stores of information captured in the memories of hundreds of the dead. Much of this information is known to nobody else living. Avalloc will share this knowledge for a fee: another skull that he can add to his collection.

Aspects: Only accessible by the bridge, The veil between the living and the dead is thin, A skull for a glimpse of the past

Loch Ness [Inbhir Nis]

Today Loch Ness is a long lake, or loch, but once it was the site of a magical well in a valley, that never dried and whose waters had to be contained by a heavy lid. Long ago the Pictish king, Maelchon, in his wars against the people of the valley, arranged for a woman to remove the lid, flooding the whole area, creating what is now the deepest loch in the country.

The local people are fishermen who make their living around its shores. According to local stories, within the lake dwells a sleeping dragon and its treasure. Whatever the truth of this, none of those who have sought to investigate the stories have returned.

Aspects: Deep dark waters, Fish aplenty, A dragon slumbers with its treasure

Lyonesse

The Fae Kingdom of Lyonesse lies off the west coast of Kernow. Most of those who seek Lyonesse do not find it, instead arriving at the Isles of Scilly, a poor place inhabited by fisher folk. The reason for this is that the realm of Lyonesse no longer exists, having

sunk centuries ago. The Scilly isles are all that remains above the water of the ancient kingdom.

Such is the magic of the Kingdom of Lyonesse that it can sometimes still be reached, for it remains a very real place, just not on mortal paths in this world. Mists form regularly in the area brought by the gods and Fae magic. At those times a difficulty 5 Survival Test can be made to navigate to Lyonesse. That is unless Lyonesse's ruler wants the wayfarer to find Lyonesse, in which case getting there is automatic. A Survival Test at the same difficulty is needed to navigate an escape route, should the traveller be too fearful to tread upon those mystical shores.

Lyonesse itself is always in warm summer with hints of early autumn in the harvests and fruit that can be found in the land all year round. Lyonesse's capital is the City of Lions, a wondrous and spacious city with architecture more closely resembling that of Ancient Greece than anything found in Britain. Stone statues of lions dot the city. The inhabitants of Lyonesse are mainly summer Fae. Their ruler, as indicated above, is Queen Vivien the Enchantress. Amongst other powers, she can command the stone lions to come to life and follow instructions. Vivien is able to summon and clear the mists that enable one to find or leave the kingdom.

The Fae of Lyonesse, and Vivien in particular, sometimes take an interest in the human world. The Fae of Lyonesse kidnapped Lancelot, Prince of Armorica, when he was a child. Vivien has raised and taught him as her own before setting him free in Britain. Unknown to his parents, taking Lancelot was part of Vivien's price for a pact made with the Kingdom of Armorica. Vivien has her reasons for releasing him at the present time but she has remained silent on the matter.

Another human project currently in Lyonesse is the child Tristram ap Tallwch, now a teenager, who is being trained by Vivien's court to be another mighty warrior. Precisely what Vivien hopes to accomplish by such projects and her desires for Britain remain, for the present, unknown. Some speculate that the schemes have something to do with The Queen of Air and Darkness of the Great Caledonian Forest, Vivien's great enemy. Of course, being Fae, Vivien does not need reasons as mortal humans understand them. Her motivation could all be whim or idle fascination.

Aspects: When in the mists you are not far away, Another perfect Summer's day, Fae fascination

The Orkney Islands

There are about seventy islands in the Orkneys, which lie off the north coast of Britain. Around twenty of these islands are inhabited, forming the Pictish kingdom of Orkney. The ruler of the islands is King Lot, who also rules the Kingdom of Gododdin. His mother was a princess of the Orkney islands. Lot seldom visits the islands he rules, residing in Gododdin. However, Lot's wife, the sorceress Morgan Le Fay, can be found here more often.

One reason for Morgan's interest in the island is Brodgar Henge, a site on Hrossey, the largest of the islands. Brodgar Henge is a magical stone circle second only to Stonehenge in its power. Within Brodgar Henge, all magical skills gain a +1 bonus. This bonus is

increased to +2 on the three days of each full moon. The only magician with access to Brodgar Henge is Morgan Le Fay; she guards it jealously. Others who might seek to access it are likely to fall victim to her magical traps.

Aspects: Isolated Islands, Many ports and landings, Power of the old stones

Stonehenge

The ancient Stonehenge was not created by the druids. Along with other stone circles, its origin stretches back into legend. The henge was built by giants in an age before the Celts even came to Britain. In recent times, Stonehenge had fallen into disrepair, but has since been restored by Myrddin. The stone circle is ritually important in some Druidic ceremonies, including the festivals of Beltain and Samhain. Only druids that have completed at least the first stage of their training are allowed to be present at these two festivals.

Stonehenge is also important as a magical focus. All magical skills receive a +2 bonus when used within the circle. A number of lesser henge, or magical stone circles, can be found dotted around Britain, including the area around Stonehenge itself. Some of these lesser henge grant a +1 bonus to magical skills, though in many cases only when used at certain times of year.

Aspects: Old stones and rituals, A power of magic, The gods are close

Stone Circles

Many stone circles, or henges, can be found in the lands of Britannia. They are used by the druids, mainly in seasonal festivals, but were not built by them. These ancient constructions were discovered. It is widely believed that the circles were erected by the giants who ruled the land in ancient times, long before the coming of the Romans. At some special locations in Britannia, the powers of the old gods are close to the land at sacred times of the year. The stone circles focus the magical energy caused by this proximity, enabling it to be used by mortals. In other words, magical skills gain a bonus at these stone circles at certain times of the year, as described in the text. Aspects present at the henge can be invoked for further bonuses.

The Wall of Antonine [Gododdin]

The Wall of Antonine is smaller and less well known than the great Wall of Hadrian. It is further north, just south of the Caledonian forest and was built of stone and turf. Much of it is already in ruins. It was completed in the year 154 and abandoned after only twenty years. Its garrisons relocated to the Wall of Hadrian when the Romans made

other treaties with the tribes between the two walls. It was briefly refortified later, during the reign of the Emperor Severus in the year 208.

North of the wall of Antonine and the Caledonian forest are the kingdoms of the Picts and, lately, the invading Gaels. The Kingdom of Gododdin occupies the land between the two walls and uses many of the surviving fortifications on the Wall of Antonine.

Before going into battle against Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon, King Lot's father, King Luwddoc, hid the mighty sword Dyrnwyn (see page 72) somewhere in the Wall of Antonine. This legendary blade has the power to burst into flame. Luwddoc was prophesied to lose the battle. Although he did not fully believe the prophecy, he did not want Ambrosius to gain the sword in the event of his defeat. After Luwddoc's death in that battle, the precise location of the sword has been forgotten.

Aspects: A forgotten great wall that time is mastering, Occasional fortifications, A hidden lost treasure

The Wall of Hadrian [Rheged]

The Wall of Hadrian once marked the northernmost edge of the Roman Empire. Its construction began in 122 and took about six years to complete. It is an awe inspiring monument to Roman engineering and organisation. If you ever get the opportunity to walk along it, do so. Unforgettable.

The purpose of the wall was more than simply the security of the northern frontier. The wall enabled rapid movement of troops along its length. To its south a number of major fortifications were built as garrisons for the army posted there. Above all the wall was both a monument to awe the people of the area with the power of Rome and a sacred marker of the outermost border of the Empire. The wall's function as a sacred boundary is significant. A number of guardian spirits known as Cuculatti are carved into the wall. These spirits are male, wear hoods and cloaks reaching to their ankles and appear in groups of three. At parts of the wall where the carvings of the Cuculatti are intact, the Fae cannot cross the boundary.

Today, the wall is still largely intact with some parts fallen into ruin. It is now only partially effective as a sacred boundary. The wall marks the border between the Kingdom of Rheged to the south and Gododdin to the north. Several of the fortifications along the wall are still used by Rheged's warriors.

Aspects: Awe-inspiring reminder of the power of Rome, Sacred border of power, Old fortifications

Ynys Mon (Anglesey)

Ynys Mon is the sacred isle of the druids, with shrines and woodland groves dedicated to each of the major gods, a number of minor gods and to some powerful Fae. Ynys Mon is also the seat of their high council, where matters affecting the whole Druidic order are decided. How binding the council is in this age is questionable. Many druids no longer acknowledge the power of the isle or the council as the order's authority. The isle is also where druids are trained.

Early in the years of the Roman occupation, a force led by general Gaius Seutonius Paulinus attacked the isle, seeking to finally break the power of the druids. He was largely successful. On hearing the news of Queen Boudicea's revolt he was forced to withdraw before the destruction was complete. Not long after the Roman legions left Britain, the island was restored by the druids.

The isle is currently occupied by Gael pirates, led by a man called Banadl. They are using the island as a base to carry out raids in coastal areas nearby. Despite this they allow the druids to continue to operate and use their part of the isle independently. The Gaels have more respect for the druids than the native British do, especially those who do not follow the old faith. Whatever is rumoured, the druids of Ynys Mon are not the allies of the Hibernians. To many people in Britain this co-existence between druid and pirate provides no clearer sign that the power of the druids has been broken. Some, mainly Christians, see it as a sign of the impending demise of the whole Druidic order.

King Osmail ap Cunedda of Gwyneth is currently waging a war against these pirates to reclaim the sacred isle for Britain. Although Banadl has made peace with the druids on the island, King Osmail has much support from the more militant members of the Druidic order on the mainland.

Aspects: Shrines and woodland groves, Power of the druids, War against the pirates

Yr Wyddfa (Mount Snowdon) [Gwynedd]

Yr Wyddfa is the tallest mountain in Britain south of the Wall of Hadrian. The mountain is a part of a range that dominates this part of Gwynedd.

Yr Wyddfa is home to Rhitta, a giant who wears a cloak made from the beards of men he has killed. It's a big cloak. Rhitta often attacks travellers on the mountain and those travelling through the main pass across the range. The pass lies just to the east of Yr Wyddfa and is littered with the bones of Rhitta's victims.

Aspects: Tall and intimidating mountain, I can hear thundering footsteps, A littering of bones



Chapter 12 - Story Telling

The Table

In Age of Arthur there is frequent mention of 'the table'. The table is the sum of all the people playing the game, the players and the Storyteller, with all opinions taken into account as to what helps make the shared story fun and interesting. The Storyteller remains the final arbiter and guide but the table, round or otherwise, is the consensus. A good Storyteller will not only account for the views of the table, but also make active use of the ideas to further fuel the dynamic story being told.

A Shared Story

Everyone at the table has a stake in the story, player and Storyteller alike. Age of Arthur encourages collaborative play. The Storyteller is responsible for creating the setting and infusing it with interesting and/or colourful locations, characters, situations and plots that the players can interact with. The plots she creates can be intricate and specific or just an outline that can be filled in as play progresses.

The players are responsible for their own characters and elements of the plot and game background that defines those characters. The player characters are the main characters and protagonists of the setting. Non-player characters, even such significant figures as Arthur and Myrddin, should not overshadow them.

Don't over prepare the plot

An overly scripted plot that drags the players along through its one specific solution does not play to the strengths of tabletop roleplaying games in general and Age of Arthur in particular. Player characters will have aspirations, oaths and, as the game progresses, will want to create their own stories. Fate Points can be spent to create new paths and influence the environment to create new opportunities.

Having said that, if the consensus of the table, after a tiring week of work, is for a tightly plotted, slightly led by the nose, adventure then go with it!



Think “yes” rather than “no”

The Storyteller should be willing to ‘go with the flow’. This can be summarised as: ‘say yes or roll the dice’. When players are engaged and making suggestions about where the game should go, it is inevitable that they will come up with ideas that the Storyteller did not plan for. A good Storyteller will look at an idea, put aside their prepared plot and either say “yes” or set a Test with a difficulty and make them roll some dice to see what happens.

Alternatives to ‘say yes’ exist that are not ‘say no’. One popular one is, ‘yes, but ...’. In this case the Storyteller agrees but adds a complication. If everyone is grinning and nodding, the Storyteller has succeeded. Another is ‘yes, and ...’. Here the Storyteller agrees and escalates the player’s idea even further.

Of course the Storyteller may say ‘no’ from time to time. That’s part of the role, to guide the story and make things interesting. A Storyteller will be keeping an eye on the bigger picture, the next twist, the surprise, the horror around the corner and sometimes a ‘no’ will be even more fun.

The way that the story flows, the amount of direction from the Storyteller and the amount of player involvement in the creative elements of plot and setting will vary with each gaming table. There is no right or wrong here, it’s just important to find the balance that works for the group.

Player and Character Awareness

Age of Arthur is designed to help with the telling of a really good shared story between players and the Storyteller. The telling of this story is at least as important as interpreting what skill and difficulty is needed for success at a Test. The talk around a typical table will be a mix of in-game character based narration and out of character rules discussion.

Player authority and character integrity are both important. Age of Arthur offers reward in the form of ‘Fate Points’ to provide a game incentive for players to shape the story in particular directions at critical moments. These points are traded between the Storyteller and the Players. Because of the ‘Fate Point economy’ conflicts can arise between what a character would logically do and what a player wants them to do. There are two things that should be considered when this situation comes up.

First, the Storyteller keeps very little game mechanical information secret. Mechanical details, such as Aspects and skills, are not hidden from the players (unless there is a strong game-based reason why that might be). Players are therefore always maintaining a double awareness at all times. The tension between player and character is something that Age of Arthur exploits powerfully. Players know much that their characters do not.

Second, there is a continual back and forth between these two levels of knowledge. Narration from the players and from the Storyteller becomes essential. A player narrates what he wants to happen, which may lead to an out-of-character agreement as to whether a Test is needed and what the target number might be. Fate dice are rolled and the result leads to more narration (from the successful player, from the Storyteller, or from the table generally) giving an interpretation of the roll within the game.

Two levels: player knowledge, based on information provided up front by the Storyteller and shared around the table, and character knowledge, more limited and defined by a narrower understanding of a situation. Each feeds off the other.

Playing with Fate

Much of the charm of the Age of Arthur system lies with its use of Fate Points. Fate Points can be spent to highlight strengths and weaknesses, in the form of Aspects. They can also be spent to power some of the more powerful Stunts. Bringing Aspects into play allows a player character to perform especially heroic actions, or avoid dismal failures. A player should spend Fate Points freely and not hoard them when it is time to shine. They are a major part of the game.

Equally, however, Fate Points should not be spent on trivial things. It is not necessary or desirable to avoid every single failure or set-back. Fate Points should be spent on what matters, and what matters of course varies from character to character.

Aspects indicate weaknesses as well as strengths and they can be compelled to recover Fate Points. Doing this is the responsibility of the whole table, not just the Storyteller. A player can compel his own character's Aspects to recover Fate Points for actions the table agrees are disadvantageous, further the story, or are just plain interesting or entertaining.

A player is not restricted to using their own character's Aspects. Aspects of non-player characters, other players, places, items, and scenes can be brought into play. This means that the game works better if such Aspects are known and in the open around the table. The Storyteller should make all of these Aspects known to the table, perhaps jotting them on an index card or piece of scrap paper when any new source of Aspects is encountered. Similarly, players should make their own characters' Aspects available to the table.

All that said, the Storyteller has a duty to facilitate compels of player character Aspects. She should certainly have a handy record of player character Aspects. One trick is to explicitly note down two or three Aspects per player character before play begins. The number depends on the number of players and length of the game session. The Storyteller should then try to think of situations to bring these Aspects into play during the session, enabling them to be compelled. It is not necessary to compel every possible Aspect for every player but by offering at least one or more, the Storyteller can keep the players engaged and participating in the story.

It is highly recommended to use this technique when designing adventures. The adventure can then be tailored to the player characters' tendencies, desires and backgrounds, so providing more personal and powerful stories. Pre-existing adventures, such as the one in this book, should always be modified to fit this philosophy.

The Storyteller not only has a role in compelling player character Aspects, but also has her own budget of Fate Points to use for non-player characters with their own Aspects.

Although the Storyteller's Fate Point budget is greater than that of any one player, she cannot regain Fate Points through compels. Yes, the player characters can compel non-player characters at the usual cost, but Fate Points spent on this are not returned to the

Storyteller. Fate Points the Storyteller gives out for compels do not come out of her personal stock.

The considerations of the Storyteller are different to those of a player. A Storyteller should spend Fate Points to promote excitement and drama rather than to attempt to benefit non-player characters or highlight their strengths. Boosting the strengths of a non-player character is not the best use of Fate Points because that only prolongs tests and makes the outcome less certain for the player characters.

Aspects indicating weaknesses for non-player characters are not directly used by the Storyteller. Each non-player character's Aspects should be open and available to the players. Such Aspects can be used by the players

If the advice in this section is followed, Fate Points will be frequently gained and lost. Using tokens such as counters, beads, poker chips, or replica Roman coins, are a useful way to keep track of Fate Points. Rather than noting numbers on papers, these tokens can be passed around the table as Fate Points are gained and lost. As well as easing book-keeping, the use of tokens lends a handy physicality to the use of Fate Points. They allow everyone around the table see how many Fate Points the others have.

Conflicts and Consequences

We mentioned above that it is not necessary to spend Fate Points to avoid every single failure or set-back. In personal combat, a social conflict or mass battle, spending Fate Points in defences simply to avoid a small amount of damage is usually undesirable, especially at the start of a conflict. Doing this every time, insisting on not losing a single exchange, will lead to quickly depleted stocks of Fate Points.

Remember, all stress is usually removed a short game time after the end of a scene. Stress damage can be mitigated by taking consequences. Mild consequences are to be expected when in conflicts, unless you are lucky or out-think or out-class your opponent with superior skills. Mild consequences are removed relatively quickly, often within a game day. Moderate and severe consequences are longer-term set-backs, imposing greater penalties on a character. They can mean that the character will not be in a proper ready state for future Test in the game session.

A straight frontal assault may not be your best option. In a battle, not every action taken has to be an attack. In a social conflict, not every action taken has to be a direct attempt to influence the outcome. Manoeuvres, used to place an Aspect, can be just as effective, if not more so. An Aspect placed by a manoeuvre can be used once at no Fate Point cost, making it a powerful tool that can be brought into play to drive the action forward.

Manoeuvres provide a way for characters without 'appropriate' skills to be effective in a conflict. For example, in personal combat, a priest with no notable fighting skills can be useful to allies by distracting opponents through relevant manoeuvres. Similar considerations apply to other conflicts. Lack of obvious applicable skills is no reason not to get involved. Think what you can do to help, describe it as a manoeuvre, and now you've got an Aspect on the scene ready to be exploited by your friends.

Some opponents have very good defences. Against such opponents, spending Fate Points to bring appropriate Aspects into play and using manoeuvres might be the only way to hurt them. The Storyteller should make an appropriate manoeuvre easier to accomplish than a direct attack.

Both player characters and important non-player characters can suffer Consequences. Consequences are a tool to add colour, to keep a character in a conflict or at least delay losing. However, choosing to take a Consequence is always optional.

In a non-fatal conflict, it is a perfectly valid decision for a player character to lose or seek a Concession rather than suffer a moderate or severe Consequence with the attendant long-term effects. Victory at all costs is not the only way.

Using Consequences wisely is even more important for the Storyteller's non-player characters. If the player characters are going to comfortably win a conflict, there is really no reason to draw it out by having the non-player characters suffer a series of Consequences. This is true even if the conflict is fatal for the poor loser. To repeat, there is no point in drawing out a conflict without a good reason such as advancing the story in a specific way.

On the other hand, in a close fight with a major enemy where the stakes are high, Consequences can be used to prevent the player characters winning too easily. In such situations the player characters deserve a tough conflict, where victory is not automatic. The cycle of your narrative may provide the players with sweet victories and bitter defeats. This roller-coaster ride of tense conflicts brings play to life and enriches the story you are all telling.

As a guideline, minor NPCs should not take any Consequences in a conflict. Significant NPCs should take one Consequence and major NPCs should take two Consequences. In an epic climactic battle, the major enemy could take all three Consequences, assuming this prolongs the excitement of a conflict. Similarly, a major recurring threat could also take all three Consequences.

Setting Difficulties for Tests

Storytellers will often be setting Tests for the player characters. What difficulty number should be used for Simple Tests, not measured against an opposing character? Our suggestion is to set the difficulty at 0 for a simple Test without any complications. Each complication adds +2 to the difficulty. So for example, simply climbing an ordinary cliff, in good conditions, where there are lots of handholds and so on, will require an Agility Test at difficulty 0.

On the other hand, climbing a sheer cliff (+2) in a storm (+2) at night (+2), when it is icy (+2) will be a Test with a difficulty of 8. These guidelines are fairly generous, allowing characters to excel at simple tasks that play to their strengths, especially when Aspects and Fate Points are involved.

For some situations that require Tests described in the book we have listed the required Difficulty to succeed. Age of Arthur assumes at least one complication in a stressful situation, so difficulties are often rated at 2.

The player can improve his rolls by making appropriate manoeuvres such as taking a turn to “study the climb” (using the Awareness skill) and placing an aspect like “Slow and Careful” on the character. This assumes that the character has the extra time to take and is not running for his life or something.

Note that normal, simple actions, where there are no consequences for failure, and the Degree of Success does not matter, do not need a Test.

Mood and Magic

The default mood for Age of Arthur is one of tragic heroism. Britannia is in decline. The heroes are attempting to preserve the last remnants of civilisation against encroaching barbarism. Perhaps this struggle is hopeless, or perhaps something can be preserved. The Roman civilisation has already ended and most of its advancements have been lost. The old pre-Roman Celtic ways will similarly be swept away into the furthest edges of Britannia.

Yet, as the words tragic heroism suggest, there is room for heroism as well as tragedy. Perhaps the fractured British kingdoms can unite? The player characters are heroes, with both ability and luck. They have the favour of God or the old gods. They stand out from those around them, able to change the course of events and create a new story. The fight against darkness is not futile, even if the light can only shine for a little while.

Integral to the atmosphere of the game is the subtle power of magic. As a default, magic certainly exists and is universally believed in. Some people have seen, interacted with or fought magical creatures, the Fae, giants and even mighty dragons. Magical treasures of rare and obvious power exist. Player characters can have demonstrably magical powers.

These are secondary concerns because the focus of the game is on human interactions, the clash of human kingdoms and cultures. While the Fae and powerful magicians such as Myrddin and Morgan Le Fay manipulate events from behind the scenes, such manipulations are in the service of more mundane political concerns. Stories are driven by conflict. In Age of Arthur, these conflicts can be found between the Christian church and the druids, between the British and the Saxons and Gaels, and both between and within petty British kingdoms.

The giants and dragons that still exist are likely to be solitary beings that may be brought into one of the central conflicts or become a source of conflict themselves. There is no absolute good and evil, only a desperate need to survive in a land enveloped with war.

However, there are other options for a game. One is to increase the presence of magic and the involvement of magical beings. Perhaps the overall plot of a long-running story involves a dragon using the Saxons, who in turn worship or are enslaved by it? Perhaps the Winter Fae are planning to take back the land from all humans? Kingdoms must put aside their differences to fend them off.

Both of these ideas would be fun to explore, but they are different to the 'standard' Age of Arthur campaign presented here. They are also closer to epic fantasy than historical fantasy that comes close to presenting an absolute evil that must be opposed. This might

be what you're looking for in a game and there is nothing wrong with any of this, in the unlikely event you feel you need our permission!

Going in the other direction, one fun alternative is to decrease the presence of magic and aim for a more historically realistic game. There are no Fae, dragons or giants, though they are believed in as their stories remain in the songs and ballads sung by the bards. The same is true of magical items with observably magical effects. Characters, both player and non-player, with magical skills are still allowed, but their powers are not allowed to be too obvious.

In this type of game, Fae Glamour and Shapechanging are forbidden; their effects are too overt and magical. Divination, Druidic Magic, Faith Magic, Plant and Root and Rune Magic are all perfectly acceptable. They have effects in the game, but these effects can all be potentially explained away as superstition or coincidence. The people of the time believed in such things.

The Use of History

Age of Arthur is set in the early Dark Ages. This was a period of history where there are few reliable records and much of what is known comes from archaeology. We present an overall timeline based as much on Arthurian legend as on actual history. In the chapter on the Lands of Brittainia, some information comes from known history of the places mentioned, but other elements presented are based on myth and still others are simply our invention. On top of all this, we add magic into the mix. Any of these details can be changed by the table to fit the needs of the game.

The timeline, as presented, is not set in stone. The default option for a campaign is to set it in the period following the death of Ambrosius Aurelianus and before the rise of Arthur to become ruler. Future events in the timeline are what might happen if player character actions do not change events. One option is to have the player characters be influential allies and followers of Arthur. In this case, the events in the future timeline are what might happen if they are moderately successful. View them as guidelines for scenarios and adventures.

Another option is to have the player characters forming the core of another faction. Arthur may be just one potential warlord amongst many. He might be supplanted by the player character group. In this case, the events of the future timeline are even more tenuous. In any case, it is important not to have the player characters eclipsed by Arthur and his most powerful followers. Perhaps the events the player characters are involved in are largely unrelated to the actions of Arthur and the history presented merely acts as background.

Other time periods can be chosen for a game. The information in chapter 11 relates to the time just before Arthur's rise to power but a game can be set in a different time period. If another time is selected the history may need to be modified. At the risk of repetition, the history presented here is a guideline and can be changed, especially in the period following the beginning of the game when the Storyteller and players are actively telling their own story.

When dealing with the groups described in the Britannia chapter, the Storyteller should remember that the cultures and attitudes of post-Romans, Celts, Saxons, etc. are strange by today's standards. The players may need her help to understand how such people act and interact in the historical setting.

The cultural details are there to provide both interesting colour and an element of verisimilitude. Non-player characters will often typify cultural attitudes, but some people, including player characters, will be unique, atypical, exceptional and break cultural norms. One method to introduce such cultural details is to take just one or two ideas and weave them in as elements of a scenario, such as an encounter, a description or an action scene.

For instance, hospitality is important in Celtic cultures. A king needs to be able to feast his guests sumptuously. Violence is forbidden within a feasting hall. An incident, or for that matter a whole scenario, can centre on the need to provision guests lavishly in times of shortage, or the effects of a grave insult within a feasting hall. Further examples include: inheritance laws within a kingdom, the attitudes of druids who hold to the old ways and Christian priests who oppose them, or the Saxon attitudes to land and property. All of these are fun things to weave into your game to imbue it with a unique and different sense of time and place.

Developing Characters

In a series of Age of Arthur scenarios, characters develop and improve over time. Firstly, in between scenarios, or at the end of a gaming session, or other natural pause, there is a refresh.

During the refresh, each player gains enough Fate Points to bring them up to their Refresh Rate. Those with more Fate Points than their Refresh Rate do not benefit. Such an excess of Fate Points will be rare, especially if the game is action-packed.

At each refresh, the player characters are also awarded with experience points. A player character gains one experience point for participating in the scenario up to that point. In special circumstances, a player character might gain further experience points as follows.

- A character who has completely fulfilled an oath removes the relevant Aspect and gains 1 more experience point.
- At the storyteller's discretion, a player character who has performed exceptional deeds in the course of the session, going the extra mile with heroic or otherwise significant acts that affect the plot gains an extra experience point.

Experience points may be spent to do any of the following.

- Increase a skill by one level. The cost is a number of experience points equal to the level of the skill the character wishes to attain. So, if a character wishes to increase Awareness from Level 4 to Level 5 then this would cost 5 experience points. Skills can be increased to a maximum of Level 8.

- Gain a new skill at Level 1. This costs 1 experience point.
- Add a new Stunt. This costs 3 experience points. However, a character cannot have more Stunts than Aspects.
- Add a new Aspect. This costs 3 experience points.
- Increase the Refresh Rate by one. This costs 3 experience points. However, the number of Fate Points gained at each refresh is not allowed to exceed the number of Aspects unless they have the 'Extra Refresh Stunt'.

Rule

Character skills can go no higher than Level 8. A character can have no more than 10 Stunts.

In addition to spending experience points, every player has the chance to do one of the following at no experience point cost:

- A player may 'swap' a level from one neighbouring skill to another. A skill at Level 1 can be removed completely and a new skill added at level 1.
- A player may change an underused or no longer relevant Aspect for an Aspect relating to in-game events from previous sessions.
- A player may exchange one Stunt for another.

Characters may therefore change and develop from one session to the next, developing Skills and interests as time progresses.

Optional Rules Variations

Storyteller Scene Fate Points

With this optional rule the Storyteller no longer receives a pool of Fate Points for the session. Instead, for each scene in the game, the Storyteller gets a pool of Fate Points for the NPCs present. The size of this pool is one for each warband or minor character, two for each significant character and three for each major character. Any Storyteller Fate Points that are not spent during the scene are lost.

Here, a minor character is only really relevant in the scene, has a typical maximum skill level of 3 and is probably not even explicitly named. A significant NPC has a typical maximum skill level of 4 and most likely has their own name and agenda. A major

NPC is a major personality who significantly shapes the story and is important to the plot as a whole. They are the peers of the player characters and will most likely appear in several scenes.

The standard Fate Point pool for a session rule works well when the sessions are of a standard length, each representing a particular section of a scenario. The standard rule also has the advantage of cutting down on book-keeping a touch. When the length of scenarios, session and pace vary, as they might in a longer-running series, this rule can instead be used.

Using Fate Points after a roll

The standard rule in *Age of Arthur* is that Fate Points can be expended when an Aspect is brought into play before a roll for a +2 bonus, and after the roll for a re-roll of the dice. With this optional rule Fate Points are always spent after a roll, whether bringing an Aspect into play for a +2 bonus or for a re-roll. The same is true when using Aspects placed by manoeuvres that can be used without spending any Fate Points. Roll the dice first and then decide if you want to use that Aspect. This rule is common in other Fate-based games.

In a fight, the attacker declares which Aspects are being used first, and the defender responds. The attacker is not allowed to escalate again, spending more Fate Points in response to the defender. In any other opposed Test, the Storyteller declares Aspects first.

This option gives players more control over the randomness of Tests. They can ensure they succeed at Tests by spending Fate Points to bring Aspects into play gaining one or more +2 bonuses. They will feel a little more 'safe' than with the standard rule in *Age of Arthur*. The method you choose is largely a matter of taste for the group.

Limited Fate Point Use

This option only permits a single Aspect (and so only one Fate Point) to be spent on each roll of the dice in a Test. Each Aspect can only be used once per scene. Free Aspects, such as those placed by manoeuvres, are exempt from this restriction.

Under the standard rules, lots of Fate Points can be spent at once for epic acts, or to quickly end fights, unless they are opposed by a similar number of Fate Points spent by the Storyteller. This rule reduces the potentially epic scope, making things rather more 'realistic'. It means, for example, that a character with lots of Fate Points and suitable Aspects will find it much harder to defeat an opponent that has far superior skills but no Fate Points or relevant Aspects. Applying this rule changes the tone of the game, making Skill levels much more important. If the Storyteller is littering the landscape with such things as Giants and Dragons then the result is likely to be deadly for the characters.

Example

The warrior Rufus ap Andoc is fighting a Giant. He has the Aspects Perform Heroic Acts to Impress my Lady Love and Warrior of Renown. The giant has the Aspect Huge. In the fight, Rufus might use Perform Heroic Acts to Impress my Lady Love in the first turn, the giant's Aspect Huge in the second and his Warrior of Renown Aspect in the third turn. If he survives that long.

Under the standard rules, Rufus might (if he has the Fate Points) instead use all three Aspects at once for an impressive +6 bonus to an attack. Such 'Aspect stacking' is forbidden if this optional rule is used.

Alternative Dice

Not every group will have, or want to use Fudge dice, or interpret standard six sided dice as if they were fudge dice. Here is another mechanism to resolve Tests using two six sided dice of different colours, one light and one dark.

The method is to roll both dice and subtract the result of the darker dice from the lighter. Treat any result of -5 or +5 as zero, so the final number is from -4 to +4 as before.

So for instance, if the lighter die rolls a 6 and the darker die rolls a 2 then the 2 is subtracted from the 6 to give a dice result of +4. That's as good a roll as it gets. If the lighter die rolls a 3 and the darker die rolls a 5 then the 5 is subtracted from the 3 to give a -2 result.

Although the numbers have the same range as rolling four Fudge dice, the outcome is more random. This may suit some groups better.

Lack of Skill is -1

With this optional rule a character that doesn't have a necessary skill for a Test will be at -1 rather than the game's default of 0. This accentuates the value of having a skill at the cost of being a little less heroic.



Chapter 13 – Allies and Adversaries

Within this chapter you will find ideas and templates to describe the rich cast of characters and creatures that will populate your adventures. Whether the characters are out hunting wild boar, negotiating with the local priest or quivering before a mighty Fae noble, you will find game information here to quickly draw up your encounters.

We have also described some of the major characters that stride the lands of Britannia. Want to compare yourself to legendary Arthur? Take a peek now. Of course all that you have here is our take on their Aspects, Skills and Stunts. They only become great when life is breathed into them by the Storyteller or player.

Animals

Mundane animals have a number of skills at varying levels, but compared to human characters have few skills. An animal will usually only have one Aspect, reflecting its animal nature. A simple Aspect of "horse" or "wolf" is usually enough, though feel free to embellish with others. Examples might include: Affectionate when fed, Evasive, It's watching you, Majestic, Petulant, Really Quite Angry, Stubborn, Surly, Too close to my offspring, Vigilant.

There are no set numbers of Stunts for animals; they simply have whatever is needed. Many of these animal Stunts are not permitted to ordinary humans, though they are described in the Stunts section. Some animals have natural armour and weapons, so will also have absorption and damage scores listed.

Another difference between animals and humans in rules terms is that animals do not have separate health and composure stress scores. Instead they have a single unified stress score on which both physical and mental damage is tracked. The magnitude of this stress score depends on the Strength of the animal, as for humans, and is also modified by Stunts.

Bear

Bears are dangerous and territorial animals, but will generally only attack when provoked or defending territory or young.

Skills:	Agility 2
	Awareness 2
	Brawling 4
	Strength 5
	Survival 2
Stunts:	Tough, Armoured Skin, Natural Weapons (×2)
Absorption 1	Damage 4 (natural weapons)
Stress 8	

Bird of Prey or Raven

A raven or ordinary bird of prey or is too small to be a real threat to an adult human, though they might be a nuisance, scare you, or bring you interesting messages in their talons.

Skills:	Agility 4
	Awareness 4
	Brawling 1
	Stealth 2
	Survival 2
Stunts:	Flight, Swift
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (natural weapons)
Stress 1 or 2	

Boar

Boars have dangerous tusks and a habit of charging those they see as a threat. Player characters make a good threat. Because of the danger they pose, they are popular animals to hunt for sport as well as food.

Skills:	Agility 2
	Awareness 1
	Brawling 3
	Strength 3
	Survival 2
Stunts:	Heroic Charge, Armoured Skin
Absorption 1	Damage 2 (natural weapons)
Stress 5	

Giant Eagle

Giant eagles, with wingspans up to three metres across, are large enough to be a threat to travellers. These birds can be found in some of the more remote mountain ranges of Britannia. They're not large enough to ride and drop swords into ponds.

Skills:	Agility 3
	Awareness 4
	Brawling 3
	Stealth 2
	Strength 1
	Survival 2
Stunts:	Flight, Swift, Natural Weapons
Absorption 0	Damage 2 (natural weapons)
Stress 4	

Horse

In some adventures horses can be regarded as 'scenery', a means to get somewhere more quickly, or to accentuate status. Sometimes it will be useful to go into more detail, especially if the horse becomes embroiled in combat due to the folly of its rider. The following statistics are used for a typical horse.

Skills:	Agility 2
	Awareness 1
	Brawling 1
	Strength 4
	Survival 1
Stunts:	Beast of Burden, Swift
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (natural weapons)
Stress 5	

The British have access to trained war horses. These horses are actually ridden into battle and act as shock cavalry. They give the British a distinct advantage if they can be brought into a battle. Arthur will use them in battle against the Saxons. War horses are similar to the above, but the Brawling skill should be increased to 3 and the Damage to 2. The creature's Aspect of "horse" is refined to "war horse".

Lynx

The lynx is a short-tailed wild cat over three feet long. Lynxes tend to be solitary predators, hunting domestic farm animals. They usually shy away from contact with people but can be dangerous if cornered.

Skills:	Agility 4
	Awareness 3
	Brawling 3
	Stealth 4
	Survival 3
Stunts:	Natural Weapons, Vanish
Absorption 0	Damage 2 (natural weapons)
Stress 3	

Wolf

The wolf is the totemic predator living in packs out in the wilds. In these troubled times the wolves really are at the door in many places. Although the statistics below are for wolves, they can also be used for big dogs when detail is needed.

Skills:	Agility 3
	Awareness 3
	Brawling 3
	Stealth 2
	Strength 2
	Survival 3
Stunts:	Natural Weapons, Scent Tracking
Absorption 0	Damage 2 (natural weapons)
Stress 4	

Dragon

Dragons are, mercifully, extremely rare. The number of these creatures seen in the recorded history of Britannia can be counted on one hand. However, a dragon can, and often does, sleep for decades, usually on top of its vast hoard of accumulated treasure. If all the dragons were to awake and become active at the same time, well, that would be a terrifying and cataclysmic event. A sleeping dragon will wake immediately should it or its treasure be disturbed.

Dragons are extremely powerful beings, both physically and magically. They are a vast and oddly majestic winged reptile capable of breathing fire. The scales on a dragon's hide are so tough that they are all but impenetrable to normal weapons. Dragons are extremely long-lived, with a lifespan running into centuries. They have a keen and cunning intelligence.

In the songs and ballads dragons are known for their avarice. Over a lifetime a dragon acquires a vast hoard of treasure. The ballads and the lorekeepers suggest that one reason dragons hoard their treasure is because it is a measure of its status relative to other dragons. For some dragons, gaining treasure of any kind is an overwhelming passion. Others mainly collect a particular type of valuable. Such dragons consider themselves connoisseurs rather than vulgar hoarders.

To dragons, humans are all but beneath contempt. At best they see human as vermin that can be harnessed as compliant resources or as irritating obstacles that need to be eradicated. A dragon would think nothing of destroying a city if it furthered their own goals. Sadly many of their kind are capable of such a deed. Fortunately, most dragons prefer not to involve themselves in human affairs for good or evil.

The following statistics are for Nikor, a dragon with a lair in caverns beneath a lake. The location is unspecified and can be placed to suit the needs of your story. Nikor has recently awoken. This dragon is more of a menace than many as he takes an interest in human history, albeit a purely academic one. That said, Nikor is fairly typical so the statistics below can be modified as appropriate to suit other dragons.

Aspects:	Avaricious, Creature of Legend, Hypnotic Stare, Lair beneath the Lake, Observer of Human History, Recently Awoken after Long Sleep, Surprisingly Quick
Skills:	
Level 8	Strength
Level 7	Wealth
Level 6	Brawling, Willpower
Level 5	Awareness, Intimidation
Level 4	Lore [magic, history], Gaming, Languages
Level 3	Charm, Deception, Lore [the old gods]
Level 2	Agility, Strategy and Tactics, Survival
Level 1	Empathy, Investigation, Leadership
Stunts:	Armoured Skin (×4), Fire Breathing, Flight, Magic Resistance, Natural Weapons (×4) Strong-Willed, Swift, Tough (×2), Water Creature
Absorption 4	Damage 8 (natural weapons)
Health 19	Composure 9
Languages:	Brythonic, Goedelic, Greek, Greek Literacy, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Massive Pile of Treasure (as indicated by the high Wealth score), Collection of Rare Books

The Fae

The Fae are ancient spirits of wild places that have taken material form. All Fae are capable of using glamour, the magic of illusion and creation. Fae are paradoxical creatures, simultaneously capricious creatures of chaos, whilst also creatures of habit who do not fundamentally change behaviour over centuries. A Fae being is literally incapable of breaking the letter (though not the spirit) of a given promise.

On the surface Fae have little use for humanity except to serve as diverting playthings. Despite what some stories may say they are completely lacking in natural imagination and creativity. As such they are sometimes fascinated by these traits found in humans. There are Fae musicians and artists, but they can only mimic human music and art, perhaps combining different pieces of work. Fae are fond of kidnapping people with particular talents for this very reason. All features of Fae society are, like their art, mimicking either the society of humans or the natural world, regardless of how appropriate this is. So, for example, the Fae do not actually need to eat, drink or sleep and yet their society sometimes includes these elements just as they are found with the fleeting humans.

Many Fae are bound to a particular location, such as a river, forest or hill. These bound Fae are often powerful nobles, sometimes with courts of their own. Local people sometimes pay tribute to such Fae beings. The old Roman term for one of these small gods is a *genius locus*: the spirit of a place.

The Fae are divided into two groups: the summer Fae, called the Seelie and the winter Fae, called the Unseelie. The ruler of the Seelie is Titania, the Queen of Day. The ruler of the Unseelie is Mab, the Queen of Air and Darkness. Both of these queens are awesomely powerful beings, though in truth the grip of their authority over the Fae is strong only in their immediate presence and surrounds.

The Seelie tend to be subtle in their games and manipulations and are the most prone to kidnapping mortals. Seelie take on a beautiful appearance. By contrast, the Unseelie are often monstrous (though some make beauty into a form of monstrosity) and frequently delight in causing fear, pain and death to mortals who foolishly get too close to where they have power. That said, some of the Unseelie are more nuanced in their behaviour and can be reasoned with. It is an oversimplification to think of the Seelie as the 'good' Fae and the Unseelie as the 'evil' ones.

All Fae are magical creatures with a range of powers in addition to their skill with glamour. Every Fae has the benefit of the Second Sight Stunt and are able to temporarily grant this ability to others. Fae do not need to eat or drink, but they often do so for pleasure or ceremony. Often Fae food is made of glamour and has no nutritional value, though it tastes absolutely wonderful. They do not need to sleep or breathe, though they often seem to do so. Fae can fluently speak any language that they come across. Strangely they are almost always illiterate. Indeed, it is hard for most Fae to even comprehend the concept of writing.

The Common Fae

The common Fae are limited beings with little individuality, working constantly at a particular task. The main skill of one these Fae (at level 3) reflects this task. For example, a Fae carpenter will have the Profession [carpenter] skill, supplementing the glamour furniture with real wood. A courtier might have the Charm or Deceit skill, a minstrel the Performance skill and a soldier the Close Combat skill.

There are no half measures with Fae commoners. They will either be incredibly attractive in appearance or utterly hideous. Generally, the Seelie are comely and the Unseelie ugly, but there are always exceptions. The physically hideous commoners are sometimes known as boggarts or hobgoblins and the more attractive are sometimes called sprites or brownies.

Suggested Aspects: Comely, Hideous, Single-minded dedication to [particular task]

Skills:

Level 3 Choose one appropriate to role

Level 2 Agility, Lore [Fae]

Level 1 Awareness, Brawling, Glamour

Stunts: Fae-Blooded

Absorption 0 Damage: By weapon

Health 3 Composure 3

Equipment: Tools appropriate to role.

Brute

Suggested Aspects: Fae Monster, Bloodthirsty, Hideous, Phobia [specify], Terrifying.

Skills:

Level 5 Strength

Level 4 Brawling

Level 3 Glamour, Intimidation

Level 2 Agility, Survival

Level 1 Awareness, Stealth

Stunts: Armoured Skin (×2), Fae-Blooded, Tough, and one or two of the following: Flight, Natural Weapons, Scent Tracking, Swift, Tough (a second time), Vision of Terror, Water Creature

Absorption 2 Damage 4 (massive club)

Health 8 (or 13) Composure 3

Equipment: Massive Club (+4 damage)

Brutes are large Fae monsters that come in a number of forms. Ogres are some of the most common. They are often solitary killers but also are known to work for Unseelie masters. The Sluagh are flying spirits of the restless dead that prey on the living with a

pernicious ferocity. The Fachan is a terrifying creature with only half a body, having one leg, one arm holding a chain, a vast wide mouth and a tufted mane of black feathers. The Nuckalavee is a hideous coastal spirit resembling a one-eyed flayed centaur whose legs are partially fins.

Fortunately, all Fae brutes have a particular phobia. This is something they fear which can be used to repel them. Examples of phobias include fresh running water, salt and the sound of church bells. Phobias are unique to individual Fae. Discovering a phobia for a particular Fae requires a Lore [Fae] Test at difficulty 2 if the Fae has been closely observed over time. The Test difficulty might be higher or further research required before a Test can be attempted.

Fae Animal

At first sight Fae animals seem to resemble ordinary animals, but after a moment they appear larger, faster and have a different quality to them. Fae animals are almost as intelligent as human beings, though they can be easily tricked, in line with their animal instincts.

To provide game statistics for a Fae animal start with the write-up for a normal animal and add one to every skill, the Fae-blooded stunt, and a Glamour skill at level 1. Some Fae animals can assume a more human-like form as well as their animal one. Such Fae have a Glamour based Stunt, Alternate Form, which lets them take on this form indefinitely, unless touched by iron.

A Fae animal has the same Aspects as a mundane animal of the same type, along with another Aspect indicating its intelligent Fae nature. Fae animals can be either Seelie or Unseelie and may be under the command of other more powerful Fae.

Here are some example Fae animals to get you started. The Barghests, Fae wolves capable of assuming human form. The Cat Sidhe, which resemble a black cat the size of a lynx. The Cu Sidhe, which is an immense dark green or coal black hound and part of the Unseelie wild hunt. The Gwarddeg Y Llyn are Fae cattle with a tougher and more aggressive disposition. Use the boar, in the previous section for game details. The Roane are Fae seals who can take human form. Famously there are the Unicorns, Fae horses, distinguished by a spiralled horn in the forehead.

Fetch

Fetches are amongst the rarest, most intelligent and independent of the Fae. They are masters of disguise, trickery and stealth. Fetches delight in taking the forms of other people in order to cause chaos in their lives. They often also have a personal obsession or agenda. For example, the Fetch known as the Gancanagh delights in seducing human women. He is said by some to be the father of the great sorcerer Myrddin.

Both the Seelie and Unseelie employ Fetch spies and assassins. The main difference in attitude between Fetches allied to the Seelie and Unseelie is the degree of trouble they are likely to cause. A Fetch allied to the Seelie is likely to stop short of committing a

murder thereby getting the one they are imitating punished for the crime. One working for the Unseelie however, would see this as a delightful practical joke.

The game statistics below are for a typical Fetch, if any amongst such a rare variety can be said to be typical.

Suggested Aspects:	Allied to Seelie/Unseelie, Delights in Chaos, Never tell the truth when a lie will do, Personal agenda
Skills:	
Level 5	Deception
Level 4	Stealth, Glamour
Level 3	Agility, Melee Combat, Strength
Level 2	Awareness, Empathy, Lore [Fae], Intimidation
Level 1	Brawling, Investigation, Missile Combat, Survival, Willpower
Stunts:	Armoured Skin, Fae-Blooded, Melee Combat Specialism [+2 damage for surprise attacks], Fade from Sight, Perfect Disguise
Absorption 1	Damage 2 (sword)
Health 19	Composure 9
Equipment:	Sword (Damage 2), Pouch of Gold Coins (made of glamour and turning back to leaves if touched by iron, or at the next sunrise).

Fae Noble

Fae Nobles are the most powerful Fae beings and rule over groups of Fae Commoners. Some Fae Nobles also have Brutes and Fae Animals under their command, though such control can be unreliable.

As Fae Nobles are powerful and varied individuals, they should be created as such in your stories. It is suggested that a 'typical' Fae noble is created with four Aspects, as many Stunts as are needed and twenty-one skills:

One skill at level 6
 Two skills at level 5
 Three skills at level 4
 Four skills at level 3
 Five skills at level 2
 Six skills at level 1

Lady Maria Antonia

Unusually for one of the Fae, Maria Antonia has taken on Roman manners. Her domain resembles a Roman estate with a fine villa at its centre. Commoners act as her slaves. Her household guard includes ogres and barghests.

Despite her fearsome guards, Maria Antonia is one of the Seelie. She treats guests with great honour and presents them with fantastic gifts and luxuries, all, of course, made from the finest of Fae glamour and vanishing beyond the bounds of her estate. Maria is fickle and extremely sensitive to insults. She will set her guards on visitors, turning a peaceful situation suddenly violent, for minute breaches of Roman etiquette.

Aspects:	Fae Noblewoman, Generous, Long-term glamours in domain, Roman manners, Sensitive to insults and breaches of etiquette
Skills:	
Level 6	Glamour
Level 5	Deception, Willpower
Level 4	Awareness, Leadership, Lore [Roman culture]
Level 3	Agility, Charm, Intimidation, Lore [history]
Level 2	Empathy, Gaming, Intimidation, Melee Combat, Riding
Level 1	Languages [Latin literacy], Lore [Fae, the old gods], Performance, Strategy and Tactics, Strength
Stunts:	Elegant, Enduring Glamours, Fae-Blooded, Magic Resistance, Strong Will, Vision of Terror
Absorption 3	Damage 3 (spatha)
Health 4	Composure 8
Equipment:	Fine Roman Clothes, Spatha (Damage 3), Lorica Segmentata (Absorption 3: Appears when needed), Luxury food and drink, a ruined Roman villa made a vision of opulence through Glamour.

Giant

In Ancient times, before the Celts, the lands of Britannia and Hibernia were ruled by giants. The first king of Britain was the giant Albion. Several of the most ancient structures in the country, including the fallen causeway between Hibernia and Caledonia and a number of stone circles, including Stonehenge, were built by giants.

Giants can still be found in many of the more remote parts of Britain. Some have the lore to tame the giant eagles found in the mountainous territory they prefer. These days, giants are solitary creatures. Most are uncivilised and instinctively violent.

The giant described below is such a primitive brute. Despite this he has a fascination for games of all sorts. Perhaps this is a remnant of a more civilised past culture for his people. Some giants, however, are leant and well-spoken. For these giants, Aspects can be changed and extra skills should be added, including some level of the Charm skill along with skills such as Languages, Healing, various Lore skills and even Performance. Some learned giants also use magic such as Divination or Plant and Root.

Aspects:	Easily Tricked, Fascinated by games and puzzles, Huge, Primitive Brute
Skills:	
Level 6	Strength
Level 5	Brawling, Close Combat
Level 4	Intimidation, Willpower
Level 3	Missile Combat, Wealth
Level 2	Gaming, Survival
Level 1	Agility, Awareness
Stunts:	Magic Resistance, Tough ($\times 2$)
Absorption 0	6 (Massive Club) or 3 (Thrown Rock)
Health 15	Composure 5
Languages:	Brythonic
Equipment:	Big Latrunculi Board, Massive Club (Damage 6), Bag full of Rocks (Damage 3, medium range)

People of Britannia

The following section provides ideas and inspiration to help populate your version of Britannia with characters for your adventures.

Minor Characters

A typical unnamed non-player character, such as a soldier in a group or a servant encountered, will be a minor character. They are simply and quickly created with a total of one Aspect and six skills:

One skill at level 3
Two skills at level 2
Three skills at level 1

They do not typically have any Stunts and should be given any equipment appropriate for their status and role in the adventure.

In the examples of minor characters given below, we suggest some appropriate Aspects. The Storyteller may choose Aspects from these or pick their own to tailor the character to the needs of the adventure.

Bandit

Britannia is suffering from both poverty and war, which have taken hold due to the turmoil since the Romans departed and the Saxon expand their control. Desperation and greed have lead some men to take up the life of an outlaw and take advantage of the chaos.

Suggested Aspects:	Cold-Blooded Killer, Former Soldier, Freedom Fighter, Impoverished, Ruthless
Skills:	
Level 3	Missile Combat
Level 2	Melee Combat, Stealth
Level 1	Awareness, Deception, Survival
Stunts:	None
Absorption 1	Damage 1 (dagger or shortbow)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Latin or Brythonic
Equipment:	Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1), Shortbow (Damage 1, medium range), Dagger (Damage 1, melee or short range thrown weapon)

Beggar

Sadly, beggars are now a common sight in many of the larger towns of Britannia.

Suggested Aspects:	Con Artist, Desperate, Diseased, Frightening, Hopeless, War Injury
Skills:	
Level 3	Awareness
Level 2	Contacts, Deception
Level 1	Charm or Intimidation, Stealth
Stunts:	None
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Latin or Brythonic
Equipment:	Begging Bowl

Craftsman

An honest skilled labourer, such as a builder, carpenter or smith, can be modelled with this template.

Suggested Aspects:	Dedicated to Craft, Industrious, Loves Routine, Perfectionist, Respected in Community
Skills:	
Level 3	Profession [relevant craft]
Level 2	Awareness, Agility
Level 1	Contacts, Strength, Wealth
Stunts:	None
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Latin or Brythonic
Equipment:	Work Clothes, Artisan's Tools

Hermit or Monk

Some Christians take up lives devoted to prayer and scholarship, either in isolation or as part of a religious community. A typical hermit or monk has the following game statistics.

Suggested Aspects:	Ascetic, Learned, Loner, Pious
Skills:	
Level 3	Lore [theology]
Level 2	Survival, Willpower
Level 1	Healing, Languages, Strength
Stunts:	None
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 4	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Cheap Clothes, Crucifix, Rosary

Peasant

Peasant subsistence farmers work on land belonging to another, paying a portion of their yield as tax to their master. They are not enslaved, but generally have few prospects in life. A peasant's lord is expected to provide protection in return for the taxes he takes. In these troubled times a lord may very well have to act to defend those he protects. Peasants will be called to fight too, though they will not be trained for battle.

Suggested Aspects:	Downtrodden, Local Concerns, Ooo you were lucky, Prosperous, Salt of the Earth, Underfed
Skills:	
Level 3	Profession [farmer]
Level 2	Strength, Survival
Level 1	Agility, Awareness, Brawling
Stunts:	None
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (farming tool)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic
Equipment:	Farming Tools (Damage 1), Work Clothes

Sailor

There remains some trade by sea between British coastal towns and between Britain and the continent, especially Armorica. In sea battles where the crew of a ship must act, for example when threatened by raiders or pirates, either these statistics or the Warband rules can be used for a ship's crew.

Suggested Aspects:	Girl in Every Port, Likes a Drink, More at Home at Sea than On Land, Superstitious, Well-Travelled
Skills:	
Level 3	Survival
Level 2	Agility, Brawling
Level 1	Awareness, Gaming, Strength
Stunts:	None
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (dagger)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Dagger (Damage 1, melee or short range thrown weapon)

Saxon Raider

Saxon raiders are common on the east and south coast of Britannia. Either use this template or the Warband rules when bringing forth a destructive force of Saxons. It depends how many you might want to inflict and the level of detail needed. This template, or the more powerful templates below, could be used only for leaders and champions.

A similar template can be used for Gael raiders, found in western Wales and the lands north of the Wall of Hadrian.

Suggested Aspects:	Appetite for Destruction, Brutal, The Glory of Battle, Loot and Pillage, Superstitious
Skills:	
Level 3	Melee Combat
Level 2	Brawling, Intimidation
Level 1	Agility, Strength, Survival
Stunts:	None
Absorption 1	Damage 2 (seax) or 3 (battleaxe)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Saxon
Equipment:	Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1), Seax (Damage 2), Battleaxe (Damage 3, Two-handed)

Servant

Noble households usually have one or more servants, who may work alone or be part of a staff. Some may be trusted confidantes, whereas others may be slaves.

Suggested Aspects:	Confidante, Discontent, Enslaved, Loyal, Midget, Obsequious, Overworked
Skills:	
Level 3	Profession [servant]
Level 2	Awareness, Empathy
Level 1	Charm, Contact, Deception
Stunts:	None
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Latin or Brythonic
Equipment:	Appropriate Clothes

Soldier or Mercenary

Soldiers and mercenaries are a common feature of war torn Britannia. Many soldiers are part-time militia, who mobilise only to defend their own lands and those of their lords. Others are professional fighters trained and ready to go to war if that is where coin and fate takes them. This template is used for the latter type.

Many soldiers, especially militia, do not need this level of detail. They are more easily handled using the Warband rules. Commanders and champions requiring more detail could use either this template, or perhaps one of the templates for significant characters given below.

Suggested Aspects:	Cynical, Dutiful, Just Following Orders, Loves an Honest Fight, Thug, Will Do Anything for Pay
Skills:	
Level 3	Melee Combat
Level 2	Brawling, Missile Combat
Level 1	Agility, Awareness, Intimidation
Stunts:	None
Absorption 2	Damage 2 (spear) or 0 (sling)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1), Shield (+1 Absorption), Spear (Damage 2, melee or short range thrown weapon), Sling (Damage 0, medium range)

Thief

Street crime is as much of a problem in many of the larger towns of Britannia as banditry is in the countryside. Typical pickpockets, burglars and confidence tricksters can all be modelled by the following statistics.

Suggested Aspects:	Avaricious, Can't Resist Temptation, Desperately Poor, Nimble Fingers
Skills:	
Level 3	Stealth
Level 2	Contacts, Deception
Level 1	Brawling, Gaming, Investigation
Stunts:	None
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (cosh)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Latin or Brythonic
Equipment:	Cosh (Damage 1), Lockpicks

Significant Characters

Significant characters are more important to the story and more skilled than minor characters. In combat, groups of minor characters are often led by a significant or major character. Unlike minor characters, significant characters tend to be specifically named and often have their own evolving goals and ambitions. Significant characters are typically not quite as powerful as player characters, but they are close. A significant character specialised in a particular field will be more skilled than a starting player character that is not so specialised.

These characters are built with a total of two Aspects, one or two Stunts and ten skills:

One skill at level 4
Two skills at level 3
Three skills at level 2
Four skills at level 1

As is the case for minor characters, some suggested Aspects are listed for each example. If speed is an issue then we suggest that the Storyteller picks one Aspect from the list and a second Aspect more personal to the character.

Equipment is given as appropriate to the story rather than tied to wealth level. In exceptional cases the significant character will have an appropriate Belonging Stunt.

Entertainer

The entertainer will bring the simple magic of performance into every town and village that they travel to. The entertainer is not quite as skilled or flexible as a fully trained bard, but may have received some of the bard's instruction. As a travelling player they may still be greatly honoured if sufficiently talented.

Suggested Aspects:	Bardic Training, Hopeless Romantic, Loves to be the centre of attention, Voice like honey
Skills:	
Level 4	Performance
Level 3	Charm, Deception
Level 2	Awareness, Empathy, Gaming
Level 1	Brawling, Languages, Riding, Stealth
Stunts:	Performance Specialism [+1 singing accompanied by the lyre]
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Goedelic
Equipment:	Horse, Lyre

Hunter

The hunter is a skilled archer, tracker and woodsman. He is likely to be of peasant birth, but may have risen to a more prestigious position in the service of a noble with a fondness for hunting. He is likely to be more at home in the woods and wilds than around people.

Suggested Aspects: Loner, One with Nature, The Thrill of the Chase, Uncomfortable in Cities

Skills:

Level 4 Survival

Level 3 Investigation, Missile Combat

Level 2 Awareness, Melee Combat, Stealth

Level 1 Agility, Brawling, Riding, Strength

Stunts: Precision Shot

Absorption 0 Damage 3 (heavy spear) or 1 (shortbow)

Health 4 Composure 3

Languages: Brythonic, Latin

Equipment: Heavy Spear (Damage 3), Shortbow (Damage 1, Medium Range), Survival Gear, Trained Dog

Merchant

Those who make their living as merchants make their money by transporting and selling goods from place to place. This can be a dangerous activity in these troubled times, so a merchant's wares are usually guarded by mercenaries and other tough characters.

Suggested Aspects: Avaricious, Eye for a Good Deal, Honest, Unprincipled, Wheeler-dealer, You gotta haggle

Skills:

Level 4 Profession [Merchant]

Level 3 Contacts, Wealth

Level 2 Charm, Languages, Riding

Level 1 Awareness, Deception, Empathy, Gaming

Stunts: Contacts Specialism [+1 Trade Contacts]

Absorption 0 Damage 0 (unarmed)

Health 3 Composure 3

Languages: Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Latin Literacy

Equipment: Horse, Cart, Chest with lock, Merchant's Scales, Trade Goods, Writing Equipment

Military Commander

This template can be used for a skilled but not exceptional commander of soldiers or mercenaries. This may be someone who has risen through the ranks, or perhaps a minor noble warrior who leads men because of his status.

Suggested Aspects:	I have a cunning Plan, For Glory, Impoverished Noble, Oath to Lord, Rose through the ranks
Skills:	
Level 4	Strategy and Tactics
Level 3	Leadership, Melee Combat
Level 2	Agility, Awareness, Missile Combat
Level 1	Brawling, Riding, Strength, Wealth
Stunts:	Warband
Absorption 3	Damage 3 (spatha) or 2 (javelin)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Spatha (Damage 3), Two javelins (Medium Range, Damage 2), Ring Mail (Absorption 2), Shield (+1 Absorption), Gaming Board

Outlaw Leader

In some ways, the outlaw leader resembles the above military commander, with different skills for different circumstances. The main skill of the outlaw leader described below is archery. As usual, this template can be customised to suit with Missile Combat swapped with another skill such as Intimidation or Leadership.

Suggested Aspects:	Disgraced Soldier, Exiled Noble, Feared in every village, Folk hero, Resistance fighter
Skills:	
Level 4	Missile Combat
Level 3	Leadership, Stealth
Level 2	Awareness, Intimidation, Melee Combat
Level 1	Agility, Deception, Strength, Survival
Stunts:	Warband
Absorption 1	Damage 2 (spear or longbow)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Spear (Damage 2), Longbow (Damage 2, Long Range), Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1), Survival Equipment

Petty Noble

A petty noble comes from the upper echelons of society, is literate, has some skill at leadership and a limited amount of military expertise along with some resources. Such characters may be military commanders, or are present at the court of one of the many kingdoms. They are unlikely to be important enough to rule in their own right.

Suggested Aspects: Arrogant, Cultured, Everything money can buy, Family Honour, Generous, Get out of my way, Sheltered Upbringing

Skills:

Level 4 Leadership
 Level 3 Contacts, Wealth
 Level 2 Melee Combat, Lore [choose one], Riding
 Level 1 Charm, Intimidation, Languages, Strategy and Tactics

Stunts: Contacts Specialism (+1 in own realm)

Absorption 0 Damage 3 (spatha)

Health 3 Composure 3

Languages: Brythonic, Latin

Equipment: Spatha (Damage 3), Fine Clothes, Horse

Priest

A priest designed using this template has true faith, and so is a source of miracles. Further stunts can be added, and the skills tweaked, for a priest dedicated to healing, or fighting supernatural evil

Suggested Aspects: Good Works, Heretical Beliefs, Intolerant of Pagans, Ordained Catholic Priest, Sacred Vows, Sword of God, True Believer

Skills:

Level 4 Lore [theology]
 Level 3 Faith, Willpower
 Level 2 Charm, Empathy, Leadership
 Level 1 Healing, Languages, Lore [history], Performance

Stunts: True Faith

Absorption 0 Damage 0 (unarmed)

Health 3 Composure 5

Languages: Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy

Equipment: Crucifix, Bible, Priestly vestments

Rogue

The rogue represents a more experienced and capable criminal than that represented above in the thief template. This character will be used to making a living out of crime, rather than recently reduced to crime through desperation. For a con artist, the Stealth and Deception skills could be swapped.

Suggested Aspects:	Career Criminal, Chequered Past, Heart of gold, Hunted, I can imagine a lot, Instinctive Liar, Thrill Seeker
Skills:	
Level 4	Stealth
Level 3	Awareness, Deception
Level 2	Agility, Gaming, Investigation
Level 1	Contacts, Melee Combat, Strength, Wealth
Stunts:	Vanish
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (dagger)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Black Cloak, Dagger (Damage 1, melee or short range thrown weapon), Lockpicks

Scholar

A dark ages academic, the scholar is a learned expert in a number of different fields, but is lacking in practical skills. The scholar is assumed to be of independent means and able to pursue such studies. One option with the scholar is to improve his language skills by either adding the Many Tongues Stunt, or swapping the languages skill with one of the lore skills.

Suggested Aspects:	Bookworm, I think your efficiency would be improved if you...., Mad Genius, Oblivious, Obsessed
Skills:	
Level 4	Lore [choose one]
Level 3	Languages, Lore [choose one]
Level 2	Investigation, Lore [choose one], Wealth
Level 1	Divination [astrology], Healing, Lore [choose one], Willpower
Stunts:	Diviner
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 3	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy, Greek, Greek Literacy
Equipment:	Healing Kit, Small Library, Writing Equipment

Ship Captain

This character has skills in command, sailing and navigation (through the Survival skill). The Belonging Stunt signifies that they own their own ship, though you may remove it to change his status. Survival specialisms in sailing or navigation could also be usefully added.

Suggested Aspects:	Girl in every port, More at home at sea than on land, The good ship [name of vessel], Widely travelled
Skills:	
Level 4	Survival
Level 3	Agility, Leadership
Level 2	Awareness, Melee Combat, Wealth
Level 1	Brawling, Contacts, Gaming, Strength
Stunts:	Belonging [small sailing ship]
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (dagger)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Small Sailing Ship, Maps and Charts, Dagger (Damage 1, melee or short range thrown weapon)

Village Wise Woman

The wise woman is a local healer, with some magical and scholarly skills. This character will often be the most educated person in the locality. The wise women (and sometimes men) have much in common with druids and bards, having specialist knowledge and learning, but are of lesser power.

Suggested Aspects:	Failed Druid, Gossip, I've got a lotion for that, Never admit ignorance, Respected in community, Thinks things through
Skills:	
Level 4	Healing
Level 3	Plant and Root, Survival
Level 2	Divination [augury], Empathy, Investigation
Level 1	Charm, Languages, Leadership, Willpower
Stunts:	Diviner, Hedge Magic
Absorption 0	Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 3	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Healing Kit, Writing Equipment, A few books

Warrior

The word warrior is used in Age of Arthur to denote a member of the minor nobility who fights due to loyalty to his lord rather than for pay. This template can also be used for any experienced or naturally skilled soldier who is a touch more dangerous than one represented by the above Soldier/Mercenary template. Perhaps such a warrior is an individual champion?

Suggested Aspects:	Boastful, The Glory of War, Oath to Lord, Vengeful, Veteran of Many Battles
Skills:	
Level 4	Melee Combat
Level 3	Missile Combat, Riding
Level 2	Agility, Leadership, Strategy and Tactics
Level 1	Awareness, Brawling, Strength, Wealth
Stunts:	Fighting Style [+1 defence with sword and shield]
Absorption 2	Damage 3 (spatha) or 0 (sling)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Spatha (Damage 3), Sling (Medium Range, Damage 0), Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1), Shield (+1 Absorption), Horse

Major Characters

Major characters are the peers of the player characters and are of major importance to the story, often recurring in more than one scenario, growing in experience just as the player characters do. The characters described in this section are all individuals, rather than generic templates. As usual feel free to modify in order to create new NPCs. Some features, such as precise locations and points of origin have been left so that these can be customised to the needs of the game.

These characters are created with a total of three Aspects, two to four Stunts and fifteen skills:

- One skill at level 5
- Two skills at level 4
- Three skills at level 3
- Four skills at level 2
- Five skills at level 1

As is the case with other NPCs, major characters do not have Fate Point of their own. Aspects are activated using Fate Points from the Storyteller pool.

To create a major character that is fully equivalent to a starting player character, add two phases to the background indicating a connection with another major character

(including the player characters) along with an appropriate Aspect, an oath and enough Stunts to bring the total up to five. The characters in this section can also be used without any changes or additions.

The Bard

Originally from the Kingdom of Dyfed, Timeras is one of the foremost bards in the country and he knows it. He is motivated primarily by a desire to be involved in major historic events and so travels the country, offering his services to one side or the other in major conflicts. His dream visions often help him seek such out. In such conflicts he favours those who support the old ways over those who come from outside Britain or do not honour the old gods. He tries to be neutral but is not always successful.

Aspects:	Dream Visions Famous Bard Seeks out Conflicts
Skills:	
Level 5	Performance
Level 4	Charm, Lore [history]
Level 3	Awareness, Contacts, Empathy
Level 2	Deception, Divination [dream visions], Languages, Willpower
Level 1	Lore [magic], Melee Combat, Riding, Stealth, Wealth
Stunts:	Bardic Memory, Bardic Protection, Biting Satire, Diviner
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (staff)
Health 3	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Ogham
Equipment:	Fine Clothes, Horse, Lyre, Staff (Damage 1, +1 defence, two-handed)

The Berserker

Eldred is a huge man, seven feet tall, with bulk to match. He came to the shores of Britain a few years ago to fight and since then has been involved in many battles, seeking out the bloodiest engagements. He is a fighter and a killer.

In combat, Eldred flies into a blind rage, striking with wild ferocity at both foes and friends who get in the way. Only his incredible size and deadly instincts have kept him alive. In the few years he has been in Britain, Eldred has already built up a fearsome and not altogether enviable reputation.

Aspects:	Terrifying to both friends and enemies Huge Lust for bloody battle
Skills:	
Level 5	Strength
Level 4	Brawling, Melee Combat
Level 3	Agility, Awareness, Intimidate
Level 2	Gaming, Survival, Riding, Willpower
Level 1	Leadership, Missile Combat, Stealth, Strategy and Tactics, Wealth
Stunts:	Berserker Rage, Skin like Iron, Tough
Absorption 1	Damage 3 (battleaxe) or 2 (seax)
Health 8	Composure 4
Languages:	Saxon
Equipment:	Seax (Damage 2), Battleaxe (Damage 3, Two-handed, Rune-engraved with Aspect Blood-thirsty), Spear (Damage 2, short range if thrown)

The King without a Kingdom

Aspects:	Heir to a lost kingdom Ideals of a Celtic warrior Champion duellist
Skills:	
Level 5	Melee Combat
Level 4	Brawling, Riding
Level 3	Leadership, Strategy and Tactics, Strength
Level 2	Agility, Intimidation, Missile Combat, Wealth
Level 1	Awareness, Contacts, Gaming, Healing, Survival
Stunts:	Counterstrike, Fighting Style [+1 attack with sword and shield], Tough
Absorption 2	Damage 3 (spatha) or 0 (sling)
Health 6	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	War Horse, Spatha (Damage 3), Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1), Shield (+1 Absorption), Sling (Damage 0, Medium range)

Helig ap Glannog is technically of Royal blood, but his lands in Southern England have long since been lost to the Saxons. He is a realist and has no ambitions to reclaim his realm. Rather, he has devoted himself to the ideal of a Celtic warrior, dedicated to the notions of bravery, generosity and loyalty.

Fortunately Helig has the ability to match his ambition, being an extremely skilled fighter and a more than adequate strategist. He is proud and sometimes boastful of his skills. In battle he is always one of the most likely people to step forward as a champion to fight enemies before the main battle.

The Mercenary Commander

Edgith is unusual even amongst the Saxons: she is a warrior maiden and leader of her own loyal band. She has to fight twice as hard as her male peers for the same recognition. For that reason she has decided to make her own way in life rather than swear allegiance to any king.

Edgith and her followers are mercenaries. She will work for any who pay, both for Saxons and the British, even against her own countrymen. When no better work has presented itself, Edgith and her band have operated as outlaws. However, Edgith is a woman of her word. She will only work for one lord at a time and prides herself on never breaking a contract or a promise, let alone an oath.

Aspects:	I am no man's inferior Mercenary Commander Women of her word
Skills:	
Level 5	Awareness
Level 4	Missile Combat, Leadership
Level 3	Charm, Melee Combat, Strategy and Tactics
Level 2	Agility, Gaming, Stealth, Wealth
Level 1	Deception, Intimidation, Strength, Survival, Willpower
Stunts:	Dirty Fighter, Warband, Precision Shot
Absorption 1	Damage 3 (battleaxe) or 2 (longbow or seax)
Health 4	Composure 4
Languages:	Saxon, Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Seax (Damage 2), Battleaxe (Damage 3, two-handed, rune-engraved with Aspect Always Sharp), Longbow (Damage 2, Long Range), Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1)

The Princess

Drusilla Genesis is a proud descendant of her Roman forebears and heir to the throne of a tiny independent kingdom. She has been trained in the arts of war, negotiation and social affairs and is determined to rule in her own right despite the patrilineal Roman tradition she belongs to.

Aside from that, Drusilla is keenly Roman. She distrusts both Christianity and the worship of the old British gods, preferring the all but extinct Roman pagan traditions. This young lady seems destined to be a popular ruler as she is clearly talented and

popular within her kingdom. As the size of the realm is so small she is not yet taken too seriously outside of it. This eats away at Drusilla. She is determined to prove herself before taking the crown.

Aspects:	Determined to prove herself Future warrior queen Roman culture and religion
Skills:	
Level 5	Leadership
Level 4	Charm, Wealth
Level 3	Lore [Roman culture and history], Melee Combat, Strategy and Tactics
Level 2	Contacts, Empathy, Riding, Willpower
Level 1	Awareness, Agility, Languages, Missile Combat, Strength
Stunts:	Leadership Specialism (+1 in battle), Cutting Retort, Elegant
Absorption 0	Damage 2 (ignore 1 absorption)(gladius)
Health 4	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 absorption), Horse, Old Roman Jewellery, Small Mirror

The Saxon Commander

Aspects:	Famous Name to live up to Cool and Calculating I am no coward!
Skills:	
Level 5	Melee Combat
Level 4	Awareness, Strategy and Tactics
Level 3	Leadership, Missile Combat, Strength
Level 2	Gaming, Brawling, Survival, Wealth
Level 1	Agility, Contacts, Language, Riding, Stealth
Stunts:	Fighting Style (+1 defence with Spatha), Warband, Tough
Absorption 3	Damage 3 (spatha) or 2 (longbow or seax)
Health 7	Composure 3
Languages:	Saxon, Latin
Equipment:	Spatha (Damage 3), Ringmail (Absorption 2), Shield (+1 Absorption, rune-engraved with Aspect Unbreakable), Seax (Damage 2), Longbow (Damage 2, Long Range)

Horsa is a distant relative of the famous Saxon leader of the same name who first settled in Britain. Technically of royal blood, Horsa's immediate family fell from grace. He is determined to regain the lost power of his family and honour the great Saxon he was named after.

Horsa is an able fighter and leader. He is cool and calculating in battle rather than rash and daring. He will not take any unnecessary risks, making sure he is well armoured; something that some of his comrades mock him for. An accusation of cowardice is one of the few things that will make Horsa lose his temper.

The Saxon Wizard

Osmund is one of King Aelle's advisers. He has rare knowledge and magical power of great use to his countrymen. However, he is neither liked nor trusted, so often spends time away from the king and his other advisers on either the king's business or that of his own. To some extent Osmund has encouraged this dislike. He has cultivated an arrogant, sarcastic and often frightening manner. The truth is that Osmund truly despises his fellow man, feeling his powers and intellect make him superior. He despairs and revels in equal measure at how easily people can be manipulated.

To Osmund, magic is as much intimidation and deception as well as actual power. When working as a magician, if in human form, he daubs his face with blood and ash and wears a necklace made from the skulls of animals, all the better to cause fear and awe.

Aspects: Connections with King Aelle's court
Despises his fellow man
The Arts of Terror and Deception

Skills:
Level 5 Intimidation
Level 4 Deception, Rune Magic
Level 3 Awareness, Brawling, Willpower
Level 2 Contact, Healing, Languages, Shapechanging
Level 1 Agility, Stealth, Strength, Survival, Wealth

Stunts: Empowered Enchantment, Blessing of Wotan,
Rune Wizardry, Skin Changer

Absorption 0 Damage 0 (unarmed)
Health 4 Composure 5

Languages: Saxon, Brythonic, Latin, Futhark Runes

Equipment: Necklace of animal skulls (empowered by Rune Magic with the Aspect Otherworldly Terror, use once per scene at no Fate Point cost), Enchanted Bear and Eagle skins, Survival Equipment, Healing Kit.

Shapechanging Forms: Bear, Eagle

Eagle Form: Free Aspect, Form of the Eagle, Stunts Flight and Swift

Bear Form: Free Aspect, Form of the Bear, Absorption 1, Damage 3

Famous Folk

Artorios Aurelianus

Aspects:	Illegitimate nephew of Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon, The Sword of Albion, Tutored by Myrddin, Never lost a battle, Dream of a unified Britain, Trusts his friends implicitly, Oath to aid King Ban of Armorica in times of need.
Skills:	
Level 6	Strategy and Tactics
Level 5	Awareness, Leadership
Level 4	Charm, Melee Combat, Riding
Level 3	Brawling, Strength, Wealth, Willpower
Level 2	Empathy, Contacts, Languages, Missile Combat, Survival
Level 1	Agility, Deception, Investigation, Intimidation, Lore [history], Stealth
Stunts:	Leadership Specialism (Mass Combat), Belonging (Albion), Rally, Warband (×2)
Absorption 3	Damage 5 (Ignore 2 absorption)(Sword of Albion)
Health 5	Composure 5
Languages:	Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Scale Mail (Absorption 3), War Horse The Sword of Albion (Damage 5, Ignore 2 armour, Two-handed, Aspects: Sharp enough to cut anything, Sword of a Giant, Symbol of the true king of Britain)

In the default setting, Artorios Aurelianus, or Arthur to his friends and close comrades, is not yet high king, nor even the most prominent of Britain's many warlords. Perhaps he never will be, for all that he is a remarkable field general who has never lost a battle and whose fame is growing with every victory.

Arthur is the illegitimate nephew and only close male heir of High King Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon. As such he has a good claim to be considered the High King's heir. Of course there are other claimants, most notably that of his elder half-sister Morgan Le Fay, wife of the powerful King Lot of Gododdin and Orkney. In any case, the High Kingship of Britain has never been hereditary on the few occasions such a position has existed for more than a generation.

As a child, Arthur was sent away to far off Gododdin to be fostered by the great king Cunedda Wledig. Perhaps it was there that Arthur learned to dream of a unified Britain, united by a love of peace and just laws. Arthur did not lack for contact with the outside world, being tutored by the druid Myrddin himself, who saw something in the young man, perhaps aided with the powers of prophecy. When Arthur reached adulthood,

Myrddin gave him temporary custody of the Sword of Albion (see page 73), also known as Excalibur or the Sword of Kings.

Arthur joined the cavalry of his uncle, the High King, who acknowledged him as a relative. He was sent to lead a force to aid Ambrosius' ally, King Ban of Armorica, in his struggles against the Franks. Arthur returned to Britain when he heard of Ambrosius' death, to do what he could to aid the fractured country against the tide of chaos and invasion.

Bedwyr

Bedwyr was born a Saxon but became an orphan and was raised by the British in the town of Durvovaria. Unusually for an orphan of low station, Bedwyr was educated by the local Christian priest, Father Lucius, who made it a project to prove that even one of Saxon birth could be a godly man, capable of taking on learning. Despite the priest's wishes, Bedwyr did not join the church, he has never been fully convinced by any religion, feeling much of what is claimed is superstition.

The young Bedwyr trained to be a warrior rather than a monk or scholar. He fell in with the young Arthur and was truly inspired by the man and his vision for a unified Britain. Today, Bedwyr is Arthur's most loyal captain.

Aspects:	Pragmatic Attitude to War, Saxon by birth, but not by upbringing, Most trusted and loyal of Arthur's captains, Despises superstition, Educated by the church
Skills:	
Level 5	Melee Combat
Level 4	Agility, Brawling
Level 3	Leadership, Strategy and Tactics, Strength
Level 2	Languages, Missile Combat, Wealth, Willpower
Level 1	Awareness, Charm, Empathy, Riding, Stealth
Stunts:	Counterstrike, Dirty Fighter, Extra Refresh, Magic Resistance, Tough
Absorption 3	Damage 2 (ignore 1 absorption)(gladius) or 2 (javelin)
Health 6	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy, Saxon
Equipment:	Ring Mail (Absorption 2), Shield (+1 Absorption), Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 armour), Javelins (Damage 2, Medium Range, thrown only)

Gwenhwyfar

Gwenhwyfar is a young princess and only daughter of King Agricola of Urbe Legionis. As such she is destined for a political marriage, the best that the king can find. Urbe Legionis is a small kingdom in need of allies, a place with a considered sense of its own importance. Agricola is a practically minded man, so did not raise his daughter to be ornamental. Rather, she has been trained in the arts of politics and administration, areas in which she shows a natural talent. Agricola feels that such useful abilities can only enhance his daughter's marriage prospects. Better to find a man who can not only use such rare talents but also one who is not threatened by them in his wife. Such a connected man would make a useful ally.

Gwenhwyfar, however, has her own views. Her intelligence, so valued by Agricola, brings with it an independence that means she is not going to automatically accept her father's wishes. She is not completely sure what she wants, but knows that whatever happens she will keep her independence and that the world is a bigger place than the city-state of Urbe Legionis alone.

Aspects:	Roman ways, Determined to keep independence, Raised for a political marriage, Naturally gifted administrator, Daughter of King Agricola of Urbe Legionis
Skills:	
Level 5	Charm
Level 4	Empathy, Leadership
Level 3	Contacts, Deception, Wealth
Level 2	Awareness, Melee Combat, Lore [history], Performance
Level 1	Agility, Languages, Riding, Stealth, Willpower
Stunts:	Contacts Specialism [+1 nobles], Cutting Retort, Elegant, Martyr to the Cause
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (dagger)
Health 3	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Harp, Dagger (Damage 1, throw at short range), Jewellery, Fine clothes

Lancelot

Lancelot is the only child of King Ban and Queen Elaine of Armorica. As a five-year old child, he was abducted by the Fae Queen Vivien of Lyonesse. This was a hidden part of the price for a pact between her and the Kingdom of Armorica.

The young prince was trained by the Fae in the ways of a warrior. When he left Lyonesse to make his fortune in Britain, Vivien told him he was destined to become the best warrior in the land. Quite why Vivien told him this, or released Lancelot at the present time, remains unknown. It's clear that she seeks to use the prince in some longer game.

Lancelot, now seventeen, believes in his destiny. He remains unclear of his origins as Vivien has never revealed this to him. He is determined to find the truth.

Aspects: Believes in his destiny to become the best warrior in the land, Stolen son of King Ban of Benoic, Raised by the Queen Vivien the Enchantress of Lyonesse, Fae manufactured arms and armour, Oath: Discover who his real parents are.

Skills:

Level 5 Riding
 Level 4 Charm, Melee Combat
 Level 3 Awareness, Strength, Leadership
 Level 2 Agility, Empathy, Lore [Fae], Missile Combat
 Level 1 Brawling, Languages, Strategy and Tactics, Survival, Willpower

Stunts: Extra Refresh, Fighting Style (+1 attack in mounted combat), Melee Combat Specialism (duels), Riding Specialism (+1 in combat), Second Sight

Absorption 3 Damage 3 (spatha) or 2 (spear)

Health 5 Composure 4

Languages: Brythonic, Latin, Latin literacy

Equipment: War Horse, Scale Mail (Absorption 3), Spatha (Damage 3), Spear (Damage 2, Can be thrown at short range)

Myrddin

Myrddin, or Merlin, was born with the gift of prophecy. His father was one of the Fae, his mother a noble lady in Caerfyddin. He came to prominence when High King Vortigern's advisers informed him that just such a boy's blood was needed to stabilise a tower that the king wanted built, but kept collapsing. Myrddin revealed to him that the reason for the collapse was a sleeping dragon beneath the tower's foundations.

After the revelation, Myrddin was trained by the druids. He has since advised two High Kings, Vortigern and Ambrosius Aurelianus, always following his own agenda, which

is for what he sees as the good of Britain. Myrddin is unafraid to make his opinions known especially his contempt for kings who he sees as acting foolishly and those of power in the land who cannot see how their folly endangers the future of Britain.

Myrddin is now at the peak of his power and he knows it. He is something of a showman, embellishing true power with extraneous visual displays for the awe struck onlookers. This exuberance is especially likely when there are pretty women present.

Britain has never been in a worse state. Myrddin sees Arthur as the best hope for the future. He has helped and tutored him, but knows that the young warrior's future is far from certain.

Aspects: Subtle and quick to anger, Half Fae, Must uphold own reputation as the greatest wizard in Britain, Soft spot for a pretty face, Master of disguise and likes to show it, Born with the gift of prophecy, Oath: Help Artorios, for he is Britain's best hope against the darkness.

Skills:

Level 7 Druidic Magic
 Level 6 Glamour, Willpower
 Level 5 Divination [pyromancy], Healing
 Level 4 Investigation, Languages, Leadership, Lore [The Fae, History, The Old Gods]
 Level 3 Awareness, Contacts, Deception, Empathy, Plant and Root
 Level 2 Melee Combat, Intimidation, Performance, Strategy and Tactics, Survival, Wealth
 Level 1 Agility, Charm, Riding, Stealth, Strength

Stunts: Curse Barrier, Death Curse, Diviner, Druidic Training, Hedge Magic, Fae-blooded, Many Tongues, Scholar (×2), Ward, Weathermonger

Absorption 0 Damage 1 (staff)

Health 4 Composure 6

Languages: Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Greek, Saxon, Latin Literacy, Greek Literacy, Ogham, Futhark Runes, Dragon

Equipment: Horse, Staff (Damage 1, Two-handed, +1 Defence), Small library

Morgan Le Fay

Morgan Le Fay is the daughter of King Ambrosius Aurelianus' brother, Uther, and a mother who died shortly after Morgan was born. Although illegitimate, Morgan was Uther's eldest daughter and in the absence of other heirs she was legitimised and bestowed in a political marriage to the powerful northern King Lot of Gododdin and Orkney. Both Morgan and Lot found the marriage convenient politically.

The marriage ended Morgan's Druidic studies. By that time the young woman had already fallen out with her teachers, feeling she had learned everything she could from them. She also alarmed her former teachers by vanishing for some weeks in a Fae forest. In that forest she made contact with the Queen of Air and Darkness herself, receiving greater magical power and a Fae servant, Capalu, in exchange for promises of future favours. Morgan's abilities with glamour are a direct result of that bargain.

Both Morgan and Lot seek power. Morgan in particular is determined to become High Queen of Britain and fully prepared to destroy all who stand in her way. Her husband, King Lot, is already the dominant king in the lands of the north.

Aspects: Convenient marriage to King Lot, Druidic training, but fell out with teachers, Favours owed to the Queen of Air and Darkness, Fae Servant (Capalu), Eldest niece of Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon, Prepared to destroy all who stand in the way of her becoming High Queen of Britain.

Skills:

Level 6 Glamour
 Level 5 Deception, Leadership
 Level 4 Druidic Magic, Intimidation, Wealth
 Level 3 Charm, Languages, Lore [Fae], Willpower
 Level 2 Agility, Awareness, Charm, Healing, Survival, Divination [ectomancy]
 Level 1 Contacts, Empathy, Gaming, Melee Combat, Riding, Investigation

Stunts: Belonging [Capalu, Fae Servant], Call Upon the Spirits of the Departed, Curse Barrier, Druidic Training, Fae-blooded, Potent Curses, Vanishing, Vision of Terror

Absorption 0 Damage 2 (seax)

Health 3 Composure 5

Languages: Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Latin Literacy, Saxon

Equipment: Fine Clothes, Jewellery, Seax (Damage 2).

Capalu is a Fetch (see page 208). He has the Aspects: Servant of the Queen of Air and Darkness, Creature of Treachery and Deception, Loyal to Morgan as long as she causes Chaos and Misery.



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Chapter 14- Scenarios

Conflicts

There are numerous ongoing conflicts in Britannia. Conflicts of all types, be they personal or the clashes between factions and nations, all generate drama and stories. One key to a memorable scenario is to tie these two levels of conflict together. Find an interesting situation arising from a higher level conflict and then make it personal to the group of player character heroes. Fortunately, Age of Arthur has a handy tool to keep track of what is personal to heroes: their Aspects.

In this chapter we concentrate on the higher level conflicts between groups and the situations such conflicts generate. All of the scenario outlines we present, as well as the more developed scenario, can and should be adapted to fit the situation of your individual heroes. Ideally, they should have a stake in the outcome of a scenario. Of course, heroes could simply be hired to do a job, or be sent on a mission by a patron, but a more personal way of involving the heroes, at least for some scenarios in a series, is likely to make things more memorable. A quest the heroes have initiated themselves is best of all.

Some of the major conflicts at play in Britannia are listed below. One requirement of a successful series of gaming sessions is variety. One way to obtain this variety is to use several different types of conflict. More than one type of conflict can be used in a scenario. For example, scenarios involving magical creatures can be mixed in with more mundane politics.

Invaders

The invasion of the Saxons, Angles and Jutes is the central conflict that dominates Britannia. These peoples gain more and more ground each year. Remarkable leaders such as Ambrosius Aurelianus have only been able to temporarily stem the tide, never to reverse it.

The invaders are barbarians who will kill or enslave the people they conquer and destroy that which they cannot use.

However, the Saxons and their cousins are not the only invaders harrying the beleaguered Britons. The Gaels raid Britain's western shores and have settled on parts of the coast.

The Franks have conquered most of Gaul and now menace Armorica. What remains of civilisation is besieged on all sides.

Petty Kingdoms

Britannia is divided into numerous smaller independent kingdoms which have not been united since the death of Ambrosius Aurelianus. Even his rule did not unite all the lands of Britannia. Now, each of these kingdoms look to their own interests rather than those of Britain as a whole. Most of these kingdoms spend as much time fighting each other as they do invaders.

As long as the kingdoms stand apart there is no hope of stopping the invaders, let alone halting or reversing the decline of civilisation and the final dissembling of Britannia. Unification is far from easy. Some British kingdoms hate others for seemingly good cause. Other lands have a policy of preying on their neighbours. Despite even this, the main obstruction to the kingdoms uniting is the question of who should rule over such a unified land. An alliance of kingdoms would need a figurehead, a warlord to bring each of the kingdoms together. There are many contending rivals for such a position of power.

Religion

The main religious conflict in Age of Arthur is between the Christian church and the native pagan religion. However, there are also conflicts within the Christian church, and between the various pagan traditions. Christianity is split between Pelagianism, which is seen as heretical in Rome and the orthodox Catholic faith. Both branches of Christianity include good priests and bad or corrupt ones. The most senior priests wield significant political influence.

The problems facing the pagans are less to do with theology and more to do with issues of power. Before the Roman Invasion, the druids of Britain were more powerful than kings. They were priests, sorcerers and legal judges. The druids answered to authorities at Ynys Mon. Now there is no central authority, despite the claims of groups at both Ynys Mon and Ynys Mannau. Individual druids wield power without consequences, although they are not taken as seriously by the temporal authorities, especially in more Christian areas, as they were before the time of the Romans.

Magical Creatures

Britannia is a magical land. Not all of its intelligent inhabitants are human. In wilder areas the Fae can be found, as can giants and even dragons.

The Fae are divided into two factions: the summer and the winter. These two factions are in permanent conflict. Fae nobles, many who have significant lands and groups of followers, jostle for power and control. Humans are sometimes drawn into these vicious conflicts. Human politics is a fascination for some Fae, who delight in diverting the course of events to suit their own ends and watch the havoc they cause through their manipulative schemes. The games of the Fae can be both subtle and dangerous.

Giants are not usually players in the clashes of Fae factions, though some work for the winter Fae, knowingly or unknowingly. Most giants are solitary hunters or hermits. A giant is more likely to be an obstacle in another scenario, though some giants guard magical treasures, which could be the target of a quest.

Dragons are powerful enough to be obstacles to entire groups and nations. A dragon could be the target of a quest to slay it or, more likely, to take something from its hoard of treasure. There could be rival groups of hunters, each trying to lure the dragon away to gain access to some legendary artefact. A dragon may learn of something it wants in human lands, perhaps a particular treasure of a type it collects.

Outline Scenarios

The following outlines provide ideas for you to develop your own scenario. These scenarios will vary in length. Some will comfortably fit into a single session of play lasting a few hours, whereas others will take several sessions of play depending on how much detail is added. If you spend enough time developing them, some could be short series in their own rights. None of these scenarios include major details of the characters involved, or other game statistics. For NPCs and monsters, the Allies and Adversaries chapter could be simply scanned to find suitable people or beings, which can be dropped in then modified as desired by the Storyteller.

Children of the Forest

Around Mancunium, the nearby Fae of the dense sprawling forests are of the Winter courts. Until recently they have generally left the people of the town alone. However, times have changed. The Fae have become active, agitated, attacking travellers and others who stray too far from the town walls. Further, the weather is unseasonably cold, with constant mists that shroud the landscape clinging to the ground and strangling any warmth.

The cause of this unrest turns out to be a new Christian priest in town, Father Cassius. He has banned the local practice of animal sacrifice every full moon to a local goddess, Nimue. He has proclaimed this to be an evil practice and that Nimue is not even a goddess of the old ways.

She is not. She is a Fae noble who rules over the nearby winter Fae. In return for the sacrifices by the local people she ensures clement local weather and keeps her violent subjects in check. Now that the sacrifices have stopped, she is angry. The frigid weather and clawing mist is a manifestation of her seething rage.

To restore the status quo, new terms will have to be negotiated. A visiting druid, Tamarlan, believes the key to this is a human sacrifice. He believes that a good place to start with that would be the sacrifice of the meddling priest Cassius.

The Fall of Armorica

A young warrior, Lancelot, has entered the service of the same lord the player characters are associated with. The heroes and Lancelot are assigned to lead a warband against a large group of Saxon raiders.

The leader of the raiders, Albred, is not what he seems. For Albred was slain and replaced by a Fetch, with the real name Amelius. Amelius was once in the service of Vivien the Enchantress, the Fae Queen of Lyonesse. Vivien is Lancelot's foster mother.

Once the Saxons are dealt with, Amelius makes promises to each member of the group in return for his life. His promise to Lancelot is to tell him the secret of his real parents. Lancelot will seek to spare Amelius in return for this, whether or not the player characters agree. Even if the player characters kill Amelius, he will manage to tell Lancelot the secret before his death. A social contest, with fairly heavy use of Storyteller Fate Points if necessary, can be used to resolve this, as can liberally compelling appropriate player character Aspects.

Lancelot's parents are Ban and Elaine, the King and Queen of Armorica, a place troubled by the Franks and in need of warriors. Lancelot is set to go there and wishes the player characters to accompany him. If necessary he will argue that Armorica could make a valuable ally for a small British lord and there will be fame and glory to be had over the sea. For this scenario to work, the player characters should have good reason to visit Armorica to aid their plight.

When Lancelot meets his parents, Ban publicly curses Vivien for kidnapping Lancelot when he was a child and forswears his family's alliance with Lyonesse. This in turn removes Vivien's magical weather protection from Armorica. With the magical obstacles gone, Armorica is soon invaded by hordes of barbarians.

Attempting to defend Armorica is in all likelihood a doomed enterprise, though with clever tactics the barbarians could be delayed. Evacuation, at least of some people and valuables, is a possibility, though King Ban will refuse to leave. Doomed heroism is always an option.

Although this scenario is presented in a linear way, the doom of Armorica could be averted. Lancelot could be delayed from telling his parents who he is, for example, until matters are investigated further, perhaps preserving the lands magical protection. Yet, in all likelihood, this will only delay Armorica's fate. The situation is unstable and there is little long-term hope for Ban's Kingdom. But a heroic delay may be enough to prevent a complete disaster, save many lives and preserve much lore and beauty.

The High Council

The leaders of Britain meet in Urbe Legionis to decide the appointment of a new High King. The council was called by King Lot of Gododdin who, surprisingly, has the support of his cousin, King Urien of Rheged. He has a claim through his wife, Morgan, niece of Ambrosius Aurelianus. With his cousin's support, Lot is probably the most powerful of the British kings.

Many other kings are present who feel that they have a legitimate claim to the throne. King Cyngen of Powys, otherwise known by his Latin name of Ambrosius Caninus, is a descendant of Vortigern and a distant relative of Ambrosius Aurelianus. King Einion of Ebrauc still claims the title of his forebears, King of Northern Britain and now, perhaps, all of Britain. The last potential claimant is, of course, Artorius Aurelianus, Arthur. All of these kings have their own armed retainers and bodyguards, as do other kings and lords present, including King Urien.

The Angle King Wehha is also present. Wehha claims to oppose the Saxon Aella's claim to be the ruler of all of Britain and is willing to support a native High King; as long as the Britains give up any claims to the lands he now holds. Wehha's entourage includes wolves and shapechangers. King Einion of Ebrauc absolutely hates the Angles for the damage that they have done to his kingdom.

Tensions in general are running high. A heated debate could easily turn into violence. Even so, all is not as it seems. That the normally fiercely independent Urien of Rheged is willing to swear allegiance to his older cousin Lot is suspicious. In fact, Urien has been influenced by his Fae wife, Brimisent, as a favour for the Queen of Air and Darkness, who supports Morgan's ambitions to be Queen of Britain and so, in turn, Lot's ambitions to be king. Urien is not happy with his wife's influence and it would not take much to make him withdraw his support, though it would stir up other problems between Rheged and the Fae.

The greatest threat to the council, however, is King Cyngen of Powys. A unified Britain is a direct threat to the power he has achieved through preying on weakened neighbouring kingdoms caught up in other conflicts. If it remotely looks like a king is to be elected then Cyngen plans to have his followers kill either them or a prominent supporter. The Storyteller should use someone plausible and important to the player characters as a victim or potential victim, as long as this does not disrupt any future plans for the series. Cyngen will blame the murder, or attempt, on King Wehha. After all, everyone knows how untrustworthy the invaders are. He will then seek to depart in a state of seeming fear and irritation.

Wehha will not take such accusations well. He and his followers are more than willing to answer such challenges to his honour with violence.

People of the Dragon

Groups of Angles are invading the land of a lord connected to the heroes. Amongst the invaders are wolves and shapechangers. The scenario begins with the player characters leading a warband against a group of invaders.

A treaty with King Wehha of the Angles should have prevented such activity, but then the Saxons and related people are notoriously unreliable at keeping their promises. The heroes go into Angle territory as envoys to seek out King Wehha and gain agreement to stop the attacks.

The king is well protected so the characters must deal with his advisors, including his champion Uffa, first. Uffa, is very touchy on matters of honour. He will be looking for any perceived insult to the king's honour and will call out a challenge to a duel to the

death to any that besmire the king's name. If they refuse such a duel then they will no longer give the courtesy of being guests. This could leave them drastically outnumbered in an Angle town, unless they are extremely diplomatic and lucky.

With diplomacy, persuasion, or even a successful duel, King Wehha will meet with them and reveal that his lands are menaced by a group of Jutish warriors new to the island of Britain. These Jutes call themselves the People of the Dragon and are attacking all others. Their attacks are pitiless, terrifying and vicious. The Angle invaders were seeking out new territories not immediately threatened by the People of the Dragon.

If the heroes investigate further, they learn that the term People of the Dragon is not just a fanciful name but that these warriors have some magical powers drawn from a dragon that they worship as a god. The dragon dwells across the seas in Jutland. The creature is quite young as dragons go and collects followers and conquered land rather than more mundane treasure.

A temporary alliance with King Wehha and other Angle and Saxon leaders may be the best way to halt the menace of the People of the Dragon. Ultimately the dragon himself will have to be dealt with.

The Quest for the Sword

The sword Dyrnwyn, which bursts into flame, is an ancient weapon of comparable pedigree to Arthur's sword, Excalibur or Albion. It was hidden in the Wall of Antonine by its owner King Luwddoc, father of King Lot of Gododdin, before he went into a battle he was prophesied to lose.

Recently, Anrothan, a thief, broke into King Luwddoc's tomb. There he found a map showing in which part of the wall the sword is located. He sells the map to the heroes.

Unfortunately, Anrothan has not been entirely honest. The map he has sold is a copy. He has already sold copies to a group of Hibernian pirates, led by a man called Lasair and to someone working for Morgan Le Fay.

The place where the sword is located is protected by a powerful Druidic curse barrier. However, the main problem facing the characters is the other people after the sword. Lasair has seen the barrier and fears it, but hangs back when he sees the heroes approaching. The player characters can face the curse barrier for him. If they survive, then he will rob them of the sword. If they cannot face the curse barrier then he will attack and rob them anyway.

Morgan Le Fay, with a small group of soldiers, is last on the scene. She is determined to claim what she sees as hers by rights. If Morgan and Lasair join forces, as will happen if the player characters do not manipulate their foes through diplomacy, then they are likely to overwhelm the player characters. Lasair will be open to an alliance with the player characters if something is offered for his services, whereas Morgan will not be content if she does not get the sword for herself. Rather than a fight, a tense diplomatic contest between Morgan and the heroes for Lasair's alliance could be the climax of this scenario.

This scenario could be continued by having the characters discover that the sword has already been removed. Who else did Anrothan sell the map to?

Streets of Londinium

Someone close to the heroes is critically ill as the result of a magical curse. Both magical and mundane means of healing have so far failed. One hope remains: the Cauldron of Dirrnach, which is said to be able to cure any ill. Through a magical divination, the heroes have a lead to its location in the ruined city Londinium.

Getting to Londinium involves crossing Saxon lands, which is always dangerous. Although the Saxons never settled in Londinium itself, there is always a danger of running into Saxon looters.

Finding further information about the cauldron involves visiting one of the few still occupied Roman villas in the south-east of the city. These villas are extensive family homes, heavily guarded by mercenaries against the Saxons. The mercenaries are often themselves Saxon. Most of the families in the villas are extremely suspicious of outsiders, ignoring strangers or even ordering their guards to attack without asking any questions.

In particular, two of the most powerful families, the Vespilo and Novellus families, are locked in a seemingly endless feud. They send raids against each other's villas, generally inflicting no more than petty vandalism such as painting insulting graffiti. Both of these families will assume the heroes are mischief makers sent by the other and react accordingly. If the player characters are able to convince them they are not affiliated with their enemies then they might be able to help with local knowledge of one who knows of the cauldron. Either family are likely to be helpful if they undertake some act of petty vandalism (or worse) on their rivals.

The patriarch of another villa is Junius Paternulus, a distinguished gentleman who behaves as if the Romans still ruled Britain and the Saxons were no more than a nuisance. He will agree to help the player characters if they help him pre-emptively attack a group of Saxon looters in the city he believes are heading for his property.

Whatever the route, the player characters will ultimately be directed to the villa of Lady Maria Antonia, a Fae noble in the guise of a distinguished Roman matron. Maria is one of the Seelie, but her servants and guards are fearsome Fae beings and beasts. Maria is extremely sensitive to insults and will order her guards to attack visitors and expel them for absolutely minuscule breaches of old-fashioned Roman etiquette. If the player characters managed to build up a good relationship with one of the families mentioned earlier, they will be forewarned of this.

Maria can give the player characters information about the cauldron, but will demand a gift of suitable value in return. If the player characters do not impress Maria on a first attempt, they can return with a suitable gift. This remains a possibility even if they were attacked or expelled by her retainers! Maria really is that fickle. In return for further favours, the families mentioned above may also be able to help here.

Once Maria is suitably impressed, she will direct the player characters to the cauldron of Dirrnach, which is in the old Temple of Mithras. What she does not say is that the giant

Dirrnach is also in the temple and will not willingly lend out the cauldron. The giant will also want a suitable favour in return. If the player characters do agree to perform a mission for Dirrnach, he will lend them the cauldron in advance, though he will be careful to exact sincere oaths to return the cauldron and to help him with a particular task. This task is a whole new scenario and could be used to send the player characters to a different part of the country that they don't normally frequent.

Fighting Dirrnach for the cauldron is another option, but the old giant will make an extremely tough opponent, even for a group of seasoned warriors.

Be sure to create other avenues to find out about the old Temple of Mithras, should fickle Maria prove unresponsive to the attention of the player characters.

Unreliable Allies

A note reaches the player characters' lord from a Saxon thane by the name of Tormund. Tormund dictated the note to a priest in a Saxon-held village. According to the note, Tormund wishes to revolt against King Aelle who has treated him unfairly. Raids by the People of the Dragon (see scenario outline above) have forced Tormund to give up some of his land to the Jutes. Aelle has decided that it would be wiser not to oppose the power of the Jutes.

If he is to be believed, Tormund is willing to offer his allegiance to a British king. The heroes, naturally enough, go to meet him to see if he is genuine. Tormund could be a significant ally to the British. Getting to Tormund is not straightforward. The journey involves either crossing defences held by the Saxons against neighbouring British kingdoms, or crossing a forest inhabited by Unseelie Fae. Or both.

It turns out that Tormund is perfectly sincere, as are many of his followers, especially those families occupying the lost land. Not everyone agrees with this plan. Graeme, an esteemed berserker warrior with many supporters, and Wacian, a wizard nominally in Tormund's service, prefer to remain loyal to King Aelle. They hope to gain a reward for revealing the Thane's treachery.

Both Graeme and Wacian will make separate attacks on the player characters when it is safe to do so. Wacian is likely to be comparatively subtle, using magic and poison, as well as poisoned words to others in Tormund's camp. Graeme's plan, however, is to simply attack the heroes with a loyal warband once they have left the camp. If necessary the two will join forces, perhaps with others, to dispose of the player characters and bring word to Aelle.



Chapter 15 - Escorting the Princess

Escorting the Princess is a more detailed scenario than the outlines in the previous chapter. It can be used as a one off game or the first session of a continuing series that introduces the players to the system and setting. After the scenario is a sample group of player characters, with some Aspects tying them in to events.

If used with another group of player characters, the scenario can be modified to fit in with their Aspects.

Act 1- City of Legions

Introduction

King Agricola of Urbe Legionis seeks to form an alliance with Siluria to help in defence against a common enemy, the Kingdom of Powys, which lies between them. To seal this alliance, King Caradoc Strongarm of Siluria has agreed to marry Agricola's daughter, Gwenhwyfar.

Gwenhwyfar, however, is an independent woman and has reservations about the match. She will not agree to a marriage with a man she has never met, in a country she has never seen. The princess is therefore determined to meet King Caradoc in his homeland. King Agricola has acquiesced to his daughter's wishes, as he always seems to, though not without considerable exasperation.

The heroes are commanded by King Agricola to act as Gwenhwyfar's escort from Urbe Legionis to Caerleon, Caradoc's capital, across the dangerous lands that lie between them. Precisely how they come to be chosen for this important task depends on the player characters' stories and the preference of the table. Here are some suggestions:

- This scenario can be used to begin a series in which the player characters are trusted retainers and associates of King Agricola. A mission from their king is the perfect way to kick things off.
- The heroes know one of the principle characters: King Agricola, Princess Gwenhwyfar, or King Caradoc. They are trusted and willing enough to perform a special mission for such a patron.

- In an ongoing campaign, the scenario can be moved and relevant details changed. In this case Gwenthwyfar could be replaced by another princess, or Caradoc by another potential suitor with similar wishes. Most of the obstacles and possible events described in the scenario will still be usable.

In the City

Urbe Legionis is a grand old Roman city, noted for its large forum, which sometimes hosts meetings for nobles from throughout Britain. Since the death of Ambrosius Aurelianus Pendragon, there is seldom any agreement at such gatherings. Further details can be found in the gazetteer chapter.

Much of the nature of the city's culture is shaped by its king. It is also possible that the player characters will have further negotiation or contact with Agricola.

The heroes are offered an additional escort of ten soldiers by the king. These soldiers are a warband (see page 113), with the following details:

Soldiers

Aspects: Roman Discipline, Loyal to the death to Princess Gwenthwyfar.

Combat Skill Level 2

Equipment: Hardened Leather Cuirass and Shield (Absorption 2), Gladius (Damage 2), 2 Javelins (Damage 2, medium range)

Although their first loyalty is not directly to the player characters, they will follow reasonable orders and are willing to die if necessary to protect Gwenthwyfar.

King Agricola

Agricola is a stern middle-aged man, clean-shaven in Roman fashion, who is devoted to the security and well-being of Urbe Legionis. He is a local king who inherited his position. He was still in charge of local affairs when High King Ambrosius Aurelianus made the city his capital. Agricola was loyal to Ambrosius and admired him, never seeing the general's high kingship as a challenge to his local rule.

Now that Ambrosius Aurelianus is dead, Agricola focuses his attention on local problems in Urbe Legionis. His principal problem is that posed by the rapacious neighbouring Kingdom of Powys. He seeks a suitable political alliance against this threat and expects to have a say in any future selection of a High King of Britannia, but otherwise pays little attention to the wider political world.

Agricola's only heir is his daughter Gwenthwyfar, who he has trained in the arts of rulership. She will be vital to Urbe Legionis' future, both through her political acumen and a suitable marriage to seal a powerful ally.

The king is well known for continuing to follow Roman ways. He equates Roman culture as the culture with true civilisation, marking out both Urbe Legionis and a

unified Britannia against the barbarism that it is threatened with. Agricola generally dresses in the armour of a Roman centurion.

Aspects:	Gwenhwyfar is the future of the city, The value of Roman culture and traditions, For the good of Urbe Legionis, Expects a say in any choice of High King.
Skills:	
Level 5	Leadership
Level 4	Wealth, Willpower
Level 3	Contacts, Melee Combat, Strategy and Tactics
Level 2	Awareness, Lore [history], Missile Combat, Riding
Level 1	Agility, Charm, Empathy, Languages, Strength
Stunts:	Strong-willed, Contacts specialism (+1 to for other 'Roman' officials), Leadership specialism (+1 to rule of Urbe Legionis).
Absorption 4	Damage 2 (ignore 1 armour)(gladius)
Health 4	Composure 7
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Lorica Squamata and Shield (Absorption 4), -2 to physical skills except combat, Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 armour)

Leaving the City

After leaving Urbe Legionis, the heroes are pursued by Fergus, a spy working for a group of mercenaries in the employ of the Kingdom of Powys. An Awareness Test opposed by Fergus' Stealth skill is needed to spot him. Only one such Test is allowed. If the player characters do manage to spot Fergus and pursue him use Contest rules for the chase.

If Fergus manages to stay in contact with the player characters whilst remaining undetected then he relays their location to his paymaster, Belicia, the mercenary captain. With her mercenaries in tow, she will pursue the heroes. Either another Contest for the chase, or a pitched battle is likely to result. Belicia plans to capture Gwenhwyfar and take her to King Cyngen of Powys for ransom.

If Gwenhwyfar is captured, either the player characters get away, or they are also captured or killed. In any case, a cunning plan will be needed to rescue Gwenhwyfar or escape before reaching Viroconium. Belicia's band is reasonably careful, but not so careful that the heroes have no opportunity, especially if they are clever.

Fergus

Originally of Gael background, Fergus now resides in Urbe Legionis, but is in contact with a group of raiders outside the city, passing on information to them about good opportunities to prey on passing traffic from the city.

Fergus is an unscrupulous fellow, motivated by greed. He takes great pride in being good at what he does, which amounts mainly to spying and never being caught. He has short black hair and sharp blue eyes.

Aspects:	Unscrupulous, Takes pride in his skills.
Skills:	
Level 4	Stealth
Level 3	Awareness, Survival
Level 2	Deception, Investigation, Missile Combat
Level 1	Agility, Brawling, Contacts, Languages
Stunts:	Stealth Specialism (+1 to following people unseen).
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (club or shortbow)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin
Equipment:	Shortbow (Damage 1, Medium Range), Club (Damage 1), Black Cloak

Belicia Ocella

Belicia is a mercenary commander. She once offered her services as a warrior to King Agricola. The King, however, refused to employ a woman in a military capacity. Indeed, he laughed at her. Fuming at this paternalistic Roman attitude, Belicia instead found employment with Urbe Legionis' greatest rival, the Kingdom of Powys. Cyngen is happy to use Belicia's knowledge of the area. He employs Belicia to raid trade caravans coming out of Urbe Legionis .

Aspects:	Spurned by King Agricola, Mercenary, A woman in a man's world.
Skills:	
Level 4	Leadership
Level 3	Melee Combat, Missile Combat
Level 2	Awareness, Stealth, Strategy and Tactics
Level 1	Agility, Intimidation, Riding, Strength, Survival
Stunts:	Planned Assault
Absorption 4	Damage 2 (long spear or longbow; ignore 1 armour with spear)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Long Spear (Damage 2, ignore 1 absorption), Longbow (Damage 2, Medium Range, Damage 2), Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1)

Belicia has 20 men in her band. These followers, naturally enough, make up a warband.

Aspects:	Regard Belicia as lucky, Local Bandits
Combat Skill:	2
Equipment:	Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1), Spear (Damage 2), Crossbow (Damage 2, Medium Range, +1 to attack, reload between shots)

Act 2 - The Journey

There are several possible routes from Urbe Legionis to Caerleon.

By Road

The most direct route is a well-established trail. Though not a Roman road it runs directly to the capital of Powys, Viroconium and on to Siluria. Alternatively, they may travel through the mainly uninhabited country to the east of the centre of Powys, near to the valley of the River Severn. Obviously, following the road through the capital of Powys and beyond is a bad idea, but the heroes may want to chance the road for most of the journey, whilst skirting around Viroconium itself.

They may also decide to make use of disguises. This is likely to be quite disastrous if Fergus or any of Belicia's band from the previous scene get away to send word. Not that Belicia would necessarily send word of her failure, but Fergus certainly would.

If they are travelling by road, word of the travellers will reach the warriors of King Cyngen and a group will be sent to meet them. This group consists of a leader, Arwel, and a Warband twice the total size of the heroes' band. At the very least a Contest to run away or deceive this group will be needed. A full on pitched battle is possible but at considerable risk.

Arwel

Aspects:	Looking for Trouble, Illegitimate son of King Cyngen.
Skills:	
Level 4	Melee Combat
Level 3	Awareness, Missile Combat
Level 2	Leadership, Riding, Wealth
Level 1	Agility, Brawling, Strategy and Tactics, Strength
Stunts:	Fighting Style (+1 attack with sword and shield)
Absorption 3	Damage 3 (spatha) or 0 (sling)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Spatha (Damage 3), Sling (Medium Range, Damage 0), Ring Mail and Shield (Absorption 3, -1 to non-combat physical actions), Horse

There are twice as many as the total number in the heroes' band (including Agricola's soldiers) in the warband.

Aspects:	Well-paid and well-treated, Soldiers of Powys.
Combat Skill:	2
Equipment:	Leather Cuirass and Shield (Absorption 2), Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 Absorption), Sling (Medium Range, Damage 0)

Veering East

Sufficiently far to the east of the trail the land is mostly uninhabited and the heroes can travel without fear of discovery. However this area around the valley of the River Severn is known to be cursed with monsters.

One monster in this area is the giant Agnar. The giant and his two eagles love to hunt human prey. The heroes will first notice they are being distantly trailed by the eagles far out of range of any attacks. Then one of the eagles will swoop in and attack once before seeking to escape, whilst the other observes. The eagles will then reveal the heroes' position and number to Agnar, who will be seen in the distance.

Unless the player characters manage to flee the area and successfully hide, Agnar will attack, though, as noted below, he can be distracted by music.

It is possible that the heroes will seek out the giant's lair. Finding it requires an Investigate Test to find where the giant came from. The lair is a big grassy cave-like dwelling. Within are hung two giant-sized cloaks made of beards taken from human men complete with skin linings. Various arms and armour, brooches, torcs and arm rings of many different kingdoms can also be found here, all left by the giant's victims. This treasure has a total value of 5.

Agnar the Giant

Agnar is a giant, a full four yards tall, who roams the wilder parts of North Wales looking for intelligent prey. Despite his bloodthirsty habits, Agnar is not stupid. One thing Agnar loves as much as the hunt is music. He can be distracted by a well-played piece of music he has not heard before. It has even been known for him to let prey go if he is impressed, though this is more likely to simply delay his pursuit. Agnar's love of music can be revealed after a relevant Lore Test at difficulty 2.

The giant keeps two eagles, named Caesar and Augustus after the rulers of the far-off Roman Empire. He uses these eagles to help him hunt.

Aspects:	Enormous, Loud roar, The thrill of hunting intelligent prey, Two eagles: Caesar and Augustus, Distracted by music.
Skills:	
Level 6	Strength
Level 5	Brawling, Melee Combat
Level 4	Intimidation, Survival
Level 3	Missile Combat, Willpower
Level 2	Awareness, Wealth
Level 1	Agility, Lore [music]
Stunts:	Magic Resistance, Tough (×2), Belonging (x2) [eagles]
Absorption 0	Damage 6 (big club) or 3 (thrown rock)
Health 15	Composure 5
Languages:	Brythonic
Equipment:	Big Club (Damage 6), Rocks (Damage 3, medium range), Giant sized hunting horn

Aspects:	Giant Bird of Prey, Tamed by Agnar.
Skills:	
	Agility 3
	Awareness 4
	Brawling 3
	Stealth 2
	Strength 1
	Survival 2
Stunts:	Flight, Swift, Dive bomb [Similar to Heroic Charge, but +2 damage on diving attack, Natural Weapons]
Absorption 0	Damage 2 (natural weapons)
Stress 4	

Veering West

Travelling west of the direct route, through or near the Kingdom of Gwynedd, takes the group considerably out of their way. It is a dangerous trip through rough mountainous terrain haunted, it is said, by giants (at least as unpleasant as Agnar) and dragons. This route should definitely be discouraged, but at the very least will involve Survival Tests to navigate, Agility Tests to climb, and one or more encounters with a giant similar to Agnar or other monsters.

This route provides good opportunities for additional minor quests involving strange tombs, beleaguered settlements, the Fae and more. The players may need to be reminded that they have a princess in tow.

By Sea

Travel to Caerleon by sea is also a possibility. However, the west coast is constantly attacked by Hibernian raiders and pirates. This route is dangerous too! Agricola believes land is safer and will not provide a ship. If the player characters have access to a ship and can sail, then they may be able to persuade Agricola to take this option with a Persuasion Test at difficulty 6. They can always take this course of action without getting the king's permission but Gwenhwyfar will tell her father if she gets the opportunity.

In this case, Fergus does not contact Belicia and her mercenaries, but rather his fellow Gaels. The characters will be attacked by a ship full of Hibernian pirates. Run this as a Contest of Survival skills (for sailing) as the player characters are pursued, followed by a combat between the heroes and the pirates, detailed below.

Cathair mac Torloch

Aspects:	Loot and Pillage, More at home at sea than on land, Pirate Captain.
Skills:	
Level 4	Survival
Level 3	Leadership, Melee Combat
Level 2	Agility, Awareness, Survival, Missile Combat
Level 1	Brawling, Gaming, Languages, Strength, Wealth
Stunts:	Belonging (sailing ship), Survival Specialism (+1 to Sailing)
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (axes) or 0 (sling)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Sailing Ship, Two Hand Axes (Damage 1, throw at short range), Sling (Damage 0, Medium Range)

The crew are a warband with 30 members.

Aspects:	Hibernian Raiders.
Combat Skill:	2
Equipment:	Daggers and Axes (Damage 1, throw at short range)

A Place to Rest

Depending on the route taken, the player characters may find themselves in friendly territory before reaching Caerleon itself. In this case, each character should be allowed a scene where an Aspect is invoked to regain a Fate Point. There is also time to rest and heal from moderate or less extreme Consequences.

Alternatively, the GM can have something bigger and more personal planned, such as an enemy showing up. Precisely what goes on depends strongly on the player characters and the needs of the game.

Act 3 - Caerleon

The Army

On the approach to Caerleon, the heroes will easily spot an army of about 600 moving toward the city. They can decide to either catch up with this group or avoid them altogether. If they desire more information, one or more of them could try to sneak up and observe the army. To do this a character must make a Stealth Tests at difficulty 2.

If they approach the army openly or if any scout fails a stealth Test, they will be pursued by a warband detached from the army. The warband contains five warriors for each player character that was detected by failing a stealth Test or who approached openly. Each member of the warband has a skill level of 2 and is armed with spears (Damage 2, short range) and slings (0 damage, medium range).

The army consists mainly of raiders from Powys, with a core of disaffected warriors personally loyal to the general, Belaris. Belaris is a former commander from Siluria who fell out with the new king and now seeks to use military might to depose him and put things to rights. It is a simple matter for the group to make its way around and past the army if they desire. Because armies travel slower than small groups, they can make it to Caerleon with plenty of time to warn King Caradoc of the approaching army.

The main NPCs involved with the army are as follows.

General Belaris Vitalis

Originally from Siluria, Belaris fell out with the young King Caradoc after giving him a piece of his mind and losing his position as general to a useless favourite. He now works for Powys and commands a mixed force consisting of both his own men and those indigenous to Powys.

Belaris has vague plans to install himself as king once Caerleon is taken. He will also repay Powys for its help. The general is middle-aged. Although he aims to keep himself clean-shaven in Roman fashion, he perpetually has several days' worth of beard and his once fine clothes have seen better days.

Aspects:	Exiled military general, Speaks his mind, Man who would be king.
Skills:	
Level 5	Leadership
Level 4	Awareness, Strategy and Tactics
Level 3	Melee Combat, Missile Combat, Stealth
Level 2	Agility, Riding, Strength, Willpower
Level 1	Brawling, Charm, Gaming, Languages, Survival
Stunts:	Extra Refresh, Rally, Leadership Specialism (+1 to military command in mass combat)
Absorption 2	Damage 3 (spatha) or 2 (longbow)
Health 4	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Spatha (Damage 3), Longbow (Damage 2, Long Range), Ring Mail (Absorption 2, -1 to non-combat physical actions), Horse

Blaine

Blaine is a young but skilled warrior and Belaris' champion.

Aspects:	Loyal to Belaris, Vengeful.
Skills:	
Level 4	Melee Combat
Level 3	Brawling, Riding
Level 2	Agility, Leadership, Strategy and Tactics
Level 1	Awareness, Missile Combat, Strength, Wealth
Stunts:	Extra Refresh, Weapon of Vengeance
Absorption 2	Damage 3 (spatha) or 0 (sling)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Spatha (Damage 3), Sling (Damage 0, medium range), Leather Cuirass and Shield (Absorption 2), Horse

Yvaine

Yvaine grew up in a small village, but has risen to a position of importance thanks to her magical heritage. Although she grew up in the human world, Yvaine's father was one of the Fae and her mother human. Yvaine looks to have stopped ageing in her early teens. In reality she is far older than she looks.

Yvaine's magical powers gained her a position of advisor to the King of Powys. She is currently attached to General Belaris' army.

Some of Yvaine's temperament reflects her Fae heritage. She is very taken with dramatic entrances and is vengeful and spiteful against those who have delivered even the most tiny slights and insults. Her revenge over such a thing can be truly out of proportion.

Aspects:	Fae Temperament, Advisor of King Cyngen, Vengeful against all slights and insults, Old mind in a young body.
Skills:	
Level 5	Glamour
Level 4	Awareness, Deception
Level 3	Agility, Gaming, Lore [Fae]
Level 2	Melee Combat, Intimidation, Plant and Root, Survival
Level 1	Brawling, Charm, Empathy, Wealth, Willpower
Stunts:	Distracting Illusions, Fae-Blooded, Hedge Magic, Second Sight, Vision of Terror
Absorption 0	Damage 1 (dagger)
Health 3	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Cheap Jewellery, Dagger (Damage 1, throw at short range), Dice, Survival Gear

Belaris' Army

Size:	600
Aspects:	Core of elite forces personally loyal to Belaris, Raiders from Powys seeking chaos and loot.
Combat Skill:	2
Equipment:	Leather Cuirass and Shield (Absorption 2), Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 Absorption), Sling (Medium Range, Damage 0)

In Caerleon

Caerleon, like Urbe Legionis, is a Roman city, with an intact forum, basilica rededicated to the British gods and an impressive marketplace. It is generally in shabbier shape than Urbe Legionis and the walls in particular are poorly maintained and crumbling in places. Significant numbers of beggars can be found on the streets. The most significant Roman feature of the town is the amphitheatre. It is still in good conditions and used for games and gladiatorial contests, albeit with crowds far smaller than they once were.

The heroes, as visitors to the King, will be put up in Caradoc's 'hall', the quarters of the senior officers of the legion once based in the city. Caradoc can be found watching a gladiatorial match between an arena fighter, Tamm, and 'Lupus Magnus', a vast Fae wolf. The wolf is far larger than a mundane animal and is intelligent and capable of speech, though unlikely to reveal this fact. If the heroes do not intervene then the wolf quickly slaughters Tamm. The wolf is even more of a prisoner than human fighters in the arena. So, depending on the way that the situation develops, it is possible for the player characters to gain a useful Fae ally here.

The lady Gwenhwhfar will be absolutely appalled by the barbarism of both Caradoc and the contest. Player characters still interested in arranging the marriage will have their work cut out for them.

The main NPCs in Caerleon are:

King Caradoc Strongarm

King Caradoc of Siluria has been nicknamed 'strongarm' and is seemingly oblivious to the irony implicit in that name. He is not a good ruler. He is arbitrary, stubborn and favours those who flatter him with gifts by giving them positions of authority. Those who gain their positions in this way are seldom competent in their roles or do what is best for the kingdom.

The king does not really care about this. He sees Siluria as his personal playground and loves watching gladiatorial displays and games. Even so, he is not a cruel man, he is just a poor ruler due to his lack of attention to administration or care for the kingdom's welfare.

Caradoc is short dark-haired man with green eyes and a neat, well-trimmed beard.

Aspects: Siluria is my personal domain, Swayed by flattery and gifts, Loyal to personal friends, Sticks to a course of action he has decided, Fond of athletic and gladiatorial displays.

Skills:

Level 5 Wealth
Level 4 Gaming, Willpower
Level 3 Awareness, Brawling, Deception
Level 2 Leadership, Melee Combat, Riding, Stealth
Level 1 Charm, Intimidation, Languages, Performance, Survival

Stunts: Strong-willed

Absorption 0 Damage 2 (ignore 1 armour)(gladius)

Health 3 Composure 7

Languages: Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy

Equipment: Clunky gold necklace, Seal Ring of the Emperor Magnus Maximus, Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 armour)

Marius Aemilius

Aemilius is one of the few competent people occupying a position of trust in the Kingdom of Siluria. A young but very serious man, Aemilius is Caradoc's personal bodyguard.

Aspects:	No sense of humour, Surrounded by fools, Oath to protect King Caradoc with his life.
Skills:	
Level 4	Melee Combat
Level 3	Awareness, Brawling
Level 2	Agility, Strategy and Tactics, Wealth
Level 1	Leadership, Missile Combat, Riding, Strength
Stunts:	Fighting Style (+1 defence with sword and shield)
Absorption 4	Damage 2 (ignore 1 armour)(gladius) or 1 (dagger)
Health 3	Composure 4
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin
Equipment:	Lorica Squamata and Shield (Absorption 4, -2 to physical skills except combat), Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 armour), Dagger (Damage 1, throw at short range)

General Macsen ap Ban

Macsen is a drinking buddy of King Caradoc and is also a fan of gladiatorial games. He has given notable gladiators to the king including the occasional Fae beast captured in a hunt. Such gifts have earned Macsen the position of general of Siluria's armies.

Macsen enjoys the importance which goes with his rank but is not competent in his role. Macsen is always extremely well-dressed. He has a curly black hair and a moustache, but unusually, no beard. His manner is ingratiating, with an obvious and obsequious charm.

Aspects:	Fond of watching bloody fights to the death, Drinking friend of King Caradoc, Oily Charm, Out of his Depth.
Skills:	
Level 4	Wealth
Level 3	Charm, Contacts
Level 2	Deception, Empathy, Riding
Level 1	Awareness, Languages, Melee Combat, Strategy and Tactics
Stunts:	Elegant
Absorption 0	Damage 2 (ignore 1 armour)(gladius)
Health 3	Composure 3
Languages:	Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy
Equipment:	Fine Clothes, Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 armour)

Tamm

Aspects:	Arena Fighter
Skills:	
Level 3	Melee Combat
Level 2	Brawling, Intimidation
Level 1	Agility, Missile Combat, Strength
Stunts:	None
Absorption 1	Damage 2 (spear)
Health 4	Composure 3
Languages:	Latin
Equipment:	Shield (Absorption 1), Spear (Damage 2, short range)

Lupus Magnus

Aspects:	Fae Wolf, Killer Instinct.
Skills:	
	Agility 4
	Awareness 4
	Brawling 4
	Glamour 1
	Stealth 3
	Strength 3
	Survival 4
Stunts:	Fae-Blooded, Natural Weapons, Scent Tracking
Absorption 0	Damage 2 (natural weapons)
Health 4	Composure 3

The Battle

General Belaris and his forces will be at the gates of Caerleon the day after the heroes arrive. Unfortunately, the man in charge of the army of Caerleon, General Macsen, is not competent. He refuses even to call out the militia. His incompetence should be clear to anyone who speaks to him about strategy who has any knowledge of it themselves. As a 'friendly' NPC he doesn't have access to the Storyteller's Fate Points. He's also not regarded as 'significant' so doesn't have any Fate Points of his own. He will likely lose the coming battle unless the heroes help or intervene.

The battle could go many ways. If the heroes manage to persuade King Caradoc to both raise the militia and replace General Macsen with someone competent then there is a chance of victory. An ideal candidate for leading the forces of Caerleon would be a player character with appropriate skills. Alternatively, Caradoc's bodyguard Marius is a more competent strategist than Macsen, though still significantly outmatched by the opposing Belaris. Persuading Caradoc will involve the contest rules in a debate.

The player characters might also be able to win the battle by helping Macsen rather than replacing him if they so choose. The army of Caerleon is as follows:

Army of Caerleon

Size:	180
Aspects:	Well-trained, Have no faith in general Macsen.
Combat Skill:	3
Equipment:	Leather Cuirass and Shield (Absorption 2), Two Spears (Damage 2, throw at short range)

If the militia are raised then double the army size to 360 men, drop skill level to 2 and add the Aspect: Cluttered with untrained militia.

The battle follows the usual rules for such an event. The set-up is as follows:

- Belaris' army has a stress score of 10. The army of Caerleon has a stress score of 3 without the militia, or 6 with them.
- Chosen champions fight for each side. Belaris' representative will be Blaine. The one fighting for Caerleon might be Marius Aemilius or a player character. As usual, the side with the winning champion gains an Aspect in the battle that can be used once at no Fate Point cost.
- Those with sorcery can manoeuvre for magical advantage, placing curses and so on. Yvaine does this for Belaris' army. There is nobody in Caerleon to oppose her unless one of the heroes steps forward. In this case, the hero and Yvaine make opposed skill Tests, with the winner granting an Aspect to the army that can be used once at no Fate Point cost. If there is no opposition then Yvaine automatically wins this contest.
- The generals on each side make opposed Strategy and Tactics Tests to set up their positions and defences. The winner gets to place an Aspect on the battle that can be used once by his side at no Fate Point cost.
- The army of Caerleon has the Aspect Defending Crumbling Walls, which they can use once at no Fate Point cost. If the army of Caerleon is without the militia, and so has a stress score of just 3, Belaris' army gets the Aspect Seriously Outnumbers the Enemy that they can use once for no Fate Point cost.

Aftermath

At the end of the scenario, either Belaris and his Powys forces have conquered Caerleon, or they have not. In the former case, the Powys forces will seek to capture King Caradoc and Princess Gwenhwyfar, as well as consolidating their hold on the city. General Belaris Vitalis will declare himself king. He is not likely to receive much support from

either Siluria or Powys for this, but will be able to hold Caerleon, at least until another conqueror comes along, most likely from Powys again.

Player characters should find a way to sneak or fight their way through the occupying army, taking Gwenhwyfar and perhaps Caradoc to safety.

On the other hand, the army of Powys might well be beaten off. In this case, King Caradoc will want to celebrate. As part of that celebration, depending on earlier encounters, he will publicly ask for Gwenhwyfar's hand in marriage. In all likelihood, Gwenhwyfar will outright refuse. Caradoc is clearly a poor king and has a cruel taste in gladiatorial sports. Some clever diplomacy will be needed from the player characters to prevent Siluria from turning into the very opposite of an ally of Urbe Legionis.

Unless a player character has won the admiration of Gwenhwyfar, she will most likely remain free for Arthur in the future timeline.

Ready to Play Characters

The following characters are suitable as a group for this scenario. They were made using the character creation rules at the start of this book, but have four Aspects each rather than six. If this scenario is run using the characters below, each player can add two Aspects to customise his character.

Name: Bleddyn ap Med

Aspects: Cursed or Blessed by Cernonnos
The Power and Rage of the Wolf
Driven out of home in Powys

Oaths: Oath made to Decius Drusus to control animal urges

Skills:

Level 5 Brawling
Level 4 Agility, Awareness
Level 3 Stealth, Strength, Survival
Level 2 Melee Combat, Gaming, Profession [farmer], Willpower
Level 1 Deception, Performance, Investigation, Lore [old gods],
Shapechanging

Stunts: Animal Speech (canines)
Brawling Specialism (+1 to attack in wolf form)
Favoured Form (wolf)
Natural Shapechanger
Skin Changer

Health: 5

Composure: 4

Refresh Rate: 5

Languages: Brythonic, Latin

Equipment: Cheap Clothes
Cudgel (Damage 1)
Survival Equipment



Notes

Bleddyn was a boy of undistinguished birth, who grew up in a small village in Powys. As a teenager, on a dare, he profaned a local shrine to the god Cernnonnos and was cursed by the god. Now, at times of stress, Bleddyn transforms into a ravenous wolf, full of rage and the desire to kill. Unsurprisingly, Bleddyn was driven from his home.

Bleddyn eventually came to the city of Urbe Legionis, where he was taken under the wing of Agricola's captain, Decius Drusus, who convinced him he could learn to control his bestial urges. Bleddyn is now torn between seeking a cure for his curse and learning more control. He can now change form when he wants to, and has learned to understand the language of dogs and wolves.

In wolf form, Blethyn has the free Aspect: Form of the Wolf, and the stunts Natural Weapons and Scent Tracking, meaning attacks do Damage 2.



Name: Father Caius Amelius

Aspects: Ordained priest
Duty to help fellow Christian
Secretly prefers the company of pagans to that of Christians
Finds vow of celibacy challenging

Oaths:

Skills:

Level 5 Leadership
Level 4 Faith, Lore [Theology]
Level 3 Charm, Empathy, Willpower
Level 2 Awareness, Contacts, Healing, Performance
Level 1 Investigation, Languages, Lore [history], Riding, Strength
Stunts: Divine Favour
Lay on Hands
Performance Specialism (+2 to give sermons)
Shield of Faith
True Faith

Health: 4
Composure: 5
Refresh Rate: 5
Languages: Brythonic, Latin, Latin Literacy

Equipment: Crucifix
Bible
Priestly Vestments
Riding Horse



Notes

Father Caius Amelius is an ordained priest of the Christian church. He has genuine faith and is a truly inspirational preacher, but he has doubts. He belongs to the Pelagian branch of Christianity, which does not see pagans as automatically damned unless they convert. Surely it is wrong that he prefers the company of pagans to his fellow Christians who seem so dull?

To combat these doubts, Amelius has taken the additional step of taking a vow of celibacy; something not absolutely necessary for a priest in these times. The trouble is that Amelius is extremely handsome. A number of women seem to take this vow as a challenge. The priest is, to his shame, often tempted. Going to visit the pagan kingdom of Suluria with the Princess Gwenhwyfar is, in its way, another penance. He is also under instructions from the bishop of Urbe Legionis to help his fellow Christians where necessary and possible. He must also see what can be done to convert the Silurian pagans, though Rome was not built in a day. Still, perhaps Gwenhwyfar's marriage could be of use there.



Name: Camilla Iviacus

Aspects: Lost everything in Powys when Cyngen became king
Old and distinguished Roman family
Eye for a profit

Oaths: Avenge family honour when the time is right

Skills:

Level 5 Charm
Level 4 Deception, Wealth
Level 3 Awareness, Melee Combat, Willpower
Level 2 Empathy, Investigation, Languages, Riding
Level 1 Agility, Lore [Roman History], Performance, Strength, Survival

Stunts: Contacts Specialism (+1 for trading contacts)
Cutting Retort
Elegant
Jack of all Trades
Charm Specialism (+1 for bargaining)

Health: 4

Composure: 5

Refresh Rate: 5

Languages: Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Latin Literacy

Equipment: Two daggers (Damage 1, throw at short range)
Horse
Cart
Writing Equipment
Set of fine clothes
Trade goods (metalwork, treasure value 3)



Notes

Camilla Iviacus is a minor member of the House of Mathrafel, the royal family of the Kingdom of Powys and an old and respected Roman family. However, she was forced to go into exile when Cyngen became King of Powys and began the task of murdering his relatives as threats to his rule.

Her family lost all of their estates and belongings. Camilla's father died of despair soon after leaving Powys. Camilla, however, is made of sterner stuff. Wealth can be lost, yes, but it can also be won. Camilla is good at that, being a naturally gifted merchant. When she has gained enough wealth then that will surely lead to some power? At that time King Cyngen will regret his actions. But there is time enough for this. Even without such an ultimate restoration of honour, wealth has an allure of its own.

The current mission to take Princess Gwenhwyfar from Deva to Caerleon provides a rare opportunity both to see what is going on in Powys, which lies between the two, and to gain a free escort across dangerous territory. This may prove useful for trade.



Name: Casnar ap Cartivel

Aspects: Agricola's Ambassador
Friends in Low Places
Insults are an Art Form
Limited Druidic Training

Oaths:

Skills:

Level 5 Performance
Level 4 Deception, Empathy
Level 3 Awareness, Charm, Stealth
Level 2 Contacts, Druidic Magic, Languages, Lore [folklore]
Level 1 Healing, Lore [history], Melee Combat, Riding, Wealth
Stunts: Bardic Knowledge
Bardic Protection
Belonging [set of very fine clothes]
Biting Satire
Extra Refresh

Health: 3
Composure: 3
Refresh Rate: 6
Languages: Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Latin Literacy

Equipment: Clothes fit for a king (an Aspect)
Staff (Damage 1, +1 defence)
Riding Horse
Healing Kit
Lyre



Notes

Casnar is an unusual ambassador in many ways. He is flashy and flamboyant, with more contacts amongst thieves and bandits than amongst nobles. Further, in performances, he prefers insults and satire to flattery.

However, King Agricola forgives him all of this and trusts him greatly for one very good reason: Casnar gets results. Unusually for a bard Casnar works for one king, Agricola, rather than for what remains of the Druidic order. For now, Agricola is pleased to have Casnar in his employment. Casnar knows that he is fortunate to have such a patron, for all that he deserves it.



Name: Decius Drusus

Aspects: All religions have merits
Thinks like a Roman general
Victory is more important than glory

Oaths: Oath to vouch for Bleddyn's good conduct

Skills:

Level 5 Strategy and Tactics
Level 4 Leadership, Melee Combat
Level 3 Awareness, Wealth, Willpower
Level 2 Languages, Missile Combat, Intimidation, Lore [Christianity]
Level 1 Agility, Brawling, Gaming, Riding, Strength

Stunts: Dirty Fighter
Fighting Style (+1 defence with gladius and shield)
Magic Resistance
Planned Assault
Rally

Health: 4

Composure: 5

Refresh Rate: 5

Languages: Brythonic, Goedelic, Latin, Latin Literacy

Equipment: Ring Mail and Shield (Absorption 3, -1 to non-combat physical actions)
Gladius (Damage 2, ignore 1 armour)
Two javelins (Damage 2)
Riding horse



Notes

Decius Drusus was the third son of a well-off family in Deva, educated by the church in order to be a priest. However, Decius decided against joining the church, never having been fully convinced by any religion. He holds a loose belief that all have merits with or without faith. His teachers still despair at the use to which Decius puts the critical reasoning they taught him.

Decius trained to be a warrior rather than a monk or scholar, seeing such skills as the best route to security and worldly success. He proved to be a naturally talented strategist and commander. Perhaps also because of the reasoning he has carefully learned, he takes a cold and rational approach to war.

Decius is not without compassion. This compassion, along with his freedom from superstition, led to him taking responsibility for a "werewolf" boy, Bleddyn ap Med, at a time when others in Urbe Legionis would have driven him out or killed him.



Name: Rufus ap Andoc

Aspects: Secretly in Love with Princess Gwenhwyfar
Agricola's Champion
Boastful
Let no Challenge go Unanswered

Oaths:

Skills:

Level 5 Melee Combat
Level 4 Agility, Awareness
Level 3 Brawling, Strength, Wealth
Level 2 Charm, Gaming, Missile Combat, Riding
Level 1 Intimidation, Investigation, Strategy and Tactics, Willpower, Survival

Stunts: Fighting Style (+1 to melee attacks with spatha)
Melee Combat Specialism (+1 in hero duels before a battle)
Heroic Charge
Quick
Extra Refresh

Health: 5
Composure: 4
Refresh Rate: 6
Languages:

Equipment: Hardened Leather Cuirass (Absorption 1)
Spear (Damage 2, Throw at short range)
Riding Horse
Spatha (Damage 3)



Notes

Rufus is the best fighter in Urbe Legionis and he knows it. As Agricola's champion he has risen to a position of great respect where his bravery and skill at arms is publicly acknowledged. Nevertheless, he never tires of boasting and demonstrating his talents.

Recently Rufus has become frustrated. He has fallen in love with the king's daughter, Gwenhwyfar, but he is of lowly birth and the princess seems unimpressed by his great fighting skills. Perhaps, as he escorts the princess, some great act of heroism will finally win Gwenhwyfar's favour? It is unfortunate that the mission could end in her marrying another. There is a chance that she will scorn King Caradoc Strongarm. Indeed, it is to be hoped for.





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Chapter 16 - Reference

Age of Arthur in a Nutshell

Characters (page 20)

Characters in Age of Arthur are described mainly through Aspects, Skills and Stunts. Aspects are short descriptive phrases referring to important parts of a character's background, strengths, weaknesses and personality. Skills represent a character's ability to do things, whether riding a horse (Riding), winning at dice (Gaming), or telling a convincing lie (Deception). Finally, Stunts are tweaks to a character's skills. They may provide a small bonus in special circumstances, or allow a skill to do something it could not before. Stunts are especially important for magic.

Simple Tests (page 83)

The most common form of Test is to take a skill and add the result of four fudge dice (4dF). To see if a Test succeeds, this result is compared to a difficulty number set by the Storyteller, or against the result of an opposing skill Test made by another character. If the player matches the difficulty number or beats the opposing skill Test then they succeed at the Test. The amount the character succeeds by is called the Degree of Success.

Aspects and Fate Points (page 78)

Characters have Aspects and Fate Points. Locations, scenes in the game and objects may also have Aspects. Fate Points can be spent to use Aspects to influence a skill Test. If one or more Aspects can be applied to a Test then, for every Fate Point spent, an Aspect is brought into play before the dice are rolled. Each Aspect provides a +2 bonus to a skill Test. A Fate Point can also be spent after the dice are rolled to re-roll them.

Aspects can also earn Fate Points to be spent later. If a player feels like they are following their Aspects and acting in a way that inconveniences their character then they get a Fate Point. The Storyteller (or another player) can also compel an Aspect. An inconvenient course of action is suggested to a player in keeping with one of their character's Aspects. If the player agrees to go along with the compel, they earn a Fate Point, though it costs a Fate Point to refuse a compel from the Storyteller.

A Fate Point can also be spent to declare a fact about the world relevant to an Aspect, though the Storyteller may modify or even discount this fact if the Fate Point is returned to the player.

Manoeuvres (page 88)

A manoeuvre is the use of a skill to create a temporary Aspect on a person, a scene or an object. It requires either a skill Test at difficulty 2, or an opposed skill Test that beats the test value of the one who opposes the manoeuvre (for example, the victim of an unfortunate temporary Aspect such as Tripped Up). This Aspect can be invoked once at no Fate Point cost.

Spin (page 87)

If a skill Test beats a difficulty by 3 or more, and there is no other benefit to the high degree of success, then the one who made the Test gains spin. This gives a +1 bonus to his or her next dice roll.

Stress Damage and Consequences (page 92)

Characters have Health and Composure stress scores. In some situations, a failed skill Test will result in damage to one of these two scores. Such damage is typically equal to the number the Test failed by. If either score reaches zero then the character is completely knocked out of the contest that caused the loss. In some situations, such as in armed combat, 'knocked out' could be fatal.

A player can reduce the amount of damage suffered by opting to take a Consequence. A Mild Consequence reduces the amount of damage by 2. A Moderate Consequence reduces it by 4 and a Severe Consequence by 6. These Consequences create new temporary Aspects which can be invoked and compelled just as other Aspects. A character can only have a maximum of one Consequence of each type. A new Consequence can be invoked once by an opponent at no Fate Point cost.

Stress damage is restored to a character shortly after the situation which caused it. Some time for reflection, a good drink, a song, or rest and attention to minor scrapes is all that is needed. Consequences generally reflect longer lasting problems, needing specific actions, healing, or lengthy periods of time convalescing.

Contests (page 98)

Contests use either the Health or Composure stress score, and are divided into a series of turns. In a contest involving two people, each turn provides an opportunity for each to make a relevant skill Test. The winner of that turn causes damage to the loser's stress score equal to the Degree of Success. This process repeats until one participant's stress score is reduced to zero, or opts to drop out of the Contest. A participant can attempt to leave a contest at any time by offering a Concession to enable them to escape.

Contests with Teams consisting of several participants on each side are possible. In this case, the best result is chosen for each side, with the damage applied to the person on

the losing side with the lowest skill Test. Another option in an 'every man for himself' situation is multiple Contests involving pairs. Pair up against an opponent and see how you fair against them.

Mortal Combat (page 104)

Combat is divided into a series of turns in which every participant acts once in order of their Awareness score, from highest to lowest, with ties broken by Agility. A typical combat action in a turn is an attack: a skill Test using Brawling, Melee Combat or Ranged Combat. In response to an attack, the victim may defend themselves using Brawling or Melee Combat (in close combat) or Agility (at range).

If the attack is successful then damage is inflicted to the defender's Health score equal to the Degree of Success, plus the damage of the weapon used, minus the absorption of any armour worn by the defender.

Warbands (page 113)

Nameless groups of combatants are termed a warband. Members of a warband are described solely by their armour and weapons, a combat skill from 0 to 4, and relevant Aspects. The combat skill is used in both attack and defence. Each member of a warband has a stress score of one, or his combat skill level, whichever is higher. Both Health and Composure damage are taken from this same score.

When a warband member has stress reduced to zero, he is out of the fight. Any extra successes carry over to further warband members. Warbands and warband members are not allowed to take Consequences.

Warbands are typically split into one group for each opponent or opposing group of warbands. A group makes a single attack at a level equal to the combat skill level, with a bonus depending on the number of people in it as follows. No more than six people may attack a single opponent.

Number in Group	Bonus
1	0
2 to 3	+1
4 to 6	+2

Battle (page 118)

A mass battle takes place between armies. Each army has a stress score. The larger army has a stress score of 10. The smaller has a stress score proportional to its relative size to the larger. For example, an army half the size of the larger army will have a stress score of 5. An army also has some relevant Aspects and a combat skill number from 0 to 4 reflecting its soldiers' abilities. A level of 2 is typical for an average army.

Before the battle, a number of activities can occur with the winning side in each of these activities gaining an Aspect which can be invoked for free. The first of these is

a simple opposed Strategy and Tactics skill Test made by the generals. The second is a simple opposed skill Test made by magicians (if any) on each side with appropriate magical skills or Stunts. The third is a duel between champions selected from each side. If one army is at least twice the size of the smaller army then it gains a free 'Seriously Outnumbers the Enemy' Aspect.

The actual battle is similar to combat, using the skills and stresses of the armies involved. A successful attack does damage equal to half the degree of success, rounded up. The Army Skill is supported by both the Strategy and Tactics and Leadership skills of its general. If a general's Strategy and Tactics or Leadership skill is equal to or higher than that of the army, the army skill gets a +1 bonus. If both skills are higher, the army skills gets a +2 bonus.

Before each turn of battle, an individual hero can pay a Fate Point to attempt a Manoeuvre, creating a temporary Aspect as usual. The difficulty of this Test is equal to the stress score of the opposing army. A character who attempts a failed Manoeuvre suffers Health damage equal to the amount he fails by.

The smaller army gets to act first. An army reduced to zero stress is routed, but can retreat before that point.

At the end of a battle, each player character and major NPC must make a Test using a skill that could be used for defence in personal combat. The difficulty is the amount of stress his army has lost. If the army was on the losing side, add a further +2 to the difficulty, and if the army was reduced to 0 stress, add a further +4 to the difficulty. If the test fails, the character suffers physical stress equal to the amount it fails by.

A Primer on Post-Roman Britannia

- Roman rule ended in Britain three generations ago. The country is divided into small quarrelling kingdoms.
- Britain is threatened by invaders. The Saxons (and Angles and Jutes) attack to the East and the Gaels from Hibernia to the West. All of these groups have settled in some coastal areas and islands. These territories are expanding.
- There has been no High King, or Pendragon, of all Britain since Ambrosius Aurelianus died in battle against the Saxons three years ago. A new High King would need a majority of the kings of the smaller kingdoms to agree on a ruler, which at present looks unlikely. There is not yet a King Arthur, and there might never be.
- A king is not an absolute ruler. Instead he is first amongst the nobles and warriors of a kingdom. One major duty of a king is hospitality, even to enemies. Fighting within a king's hall is a gross breach of the laws of hospitality and is severely punished.
- Warriors are the elite soldiers, leading the people in battle. Any cavalry are drawn from the warriors.

- Some parts of Britain, aside from the Saxon and Gael lands, remain culturally Roman. Other lands have reverted or retained their pre-Roman Celtic heritage. In Roman areas the main language is Latin, in Celtic areas the main language is Brythonic. Many can speak both tongues. Both languages are usually written in the Latin alphabet.
- The key Roman virtues are honesty, bravery and industriousness. The mind-set values self-control and seriousness of purpose. The key Celtic virtues are bravery generosity and loyalty. They place no particular value in self-restraint.
- Personal honour is sometimes more important than life itself. Honour is as much how one is perceived as how one acts. Oaths are sacred before both God or gods and men.
- The Romans are usually Christian. The Celts are usually pagan, worshipping the old gods of Britain. Christians may or may not be tolerant of pagans; some mix elements of both beliefs.
- Typical clothing for men is trousers, a tunic, leather boots or shoes and a cloak. Typical clothing for women is a tunic, girdle and shawl, though women dress more practically when they need to. Both men and women wear jewellery, especially brooches and neck rings (torcs). Tattoos are quite common for men, though not on the face or hands.
- A typical meal consists of bread accompanied by vegetables, cheese, and fresh or dried fruit. Meat is important when noble guests are entertained. The meat is freshly hunted game on special occasions. Domestic animals are also kept for this purpose.
- The main drink is beer, which is drunk by adults with most meals. Wine is prized, but is expensive and must be imported.
- Popular entertainments include music and storytelling, chariot racing, hunting, gambling dice games, and latrunculi, which is a board game resembling modern backgammon. Bards who can conjure the great tales of Britain are valued by both commoners and kings.
- Culture and learning is in decline. The great Roman works of art and engineering can no longer be matched. Most Roman architecture is falling into disrepair or ruin. Literacy rates are falling. The invaders hasten this decline and bring destruction in their wake.

Glossary

Age of Arthur uses some special terms to describe the way the game works. For convenience these special terms are grouped together here. Fuller explanations of these terms are found in the relevant chapters of the book.

Term	Description
Aspect	Aspects are pithy descriptive phrases that are given to anything described in the game. The phrase helps to describe a thing in the game and also illuminates something notable about it that can be used to influence the outcome of Tests.
Character Sheet	One or more pieces of paper that have all the information about a player character for ready reference during play.
Compel	A suggestion from another player or the Storyteller that uses one of your character's Aspects to direct behaviour in a particular way. If you agree to the compel you gain a fate point as a reward.
Concession	A player or the Storyteller who thinks their character is going to lose a Test can offer a Concession, describing their escape from the Test and losing on their own terms.
Consequence	A consequence reduces stress damage. They come in three levels: mild, moderate and severe. Unlike stress, consequences are temporary Aspects that persist when the situation that caused the stress, such as a fight, is over.
Contest	Contests are the simplest form of multiple roll Test. There are two sorts of Contest: physical and mental. Contests can be used for such things as chases and debates. Mortal combat is a form of Contest that has some extra rules for more detail.
Degree of Success	The amount by which a successful skill Test beats the target number.
Endurance Test	A Simple Test that leads to damage to a Stress Score if it fails.
Fate Points	Tokens that can be exchanged between players and the Storyteller to improve outcomes in Tests, shape characters behaviour and take control of the story.
Fudge Dice	Six-sided dice with two sides marked with a + sign, two sides marked with a - sign and two sides left blank.
Invoke	One or more Aspects can be 'invoked' during a Test to bring them into play. The Aspect usually provides a positive +2 to the result or permits a re-roll of the dice. An invoke typically costs a Fate Point.

Manoeuvre	An action described by a player in a Test that creates a new Aspect during the conflict. This Aspect can then be used by others to gain an advantage, and furthermore can be invoked once at no Fate Point cost.
NPC	Non Player Character. A character in the game that is controlled by the Storyteller.
PC	Player Character. A character in the game that is controlled by one of the players other than the Storyteller.
Refresh	A suitable moment in time when characters can replenish their Fate Points. This is usually at the beginning of a game session, but can also be at an opportune moment during a session at the Storyteller's discretion.
Scene	The duration of one particular piece of action in a session, such as a duel, a debate or a mass battle.
Session	Enough time to play one game of Age of Arthur. This typically lasts between two and five hours, though it could be longer.
Simple Test	A moment in the shared story where characters are trying to direct an uncertain outcome by using their abilities. A dice roll is made to see what happens when a Player Character or Non Player Character tries to do something when the outcome is uncertain. The roll will generate a certain number as a result. This result must equal or exceed a given target number for the attempt to be successful.
Skill	Skills describe in broad terms what a character can do, both mainly natural abilities, such as Strength, Awareness and Charm and, more typically, learned skills such as Healing, Riding and Performance.
Spin	If a skill Test has a degree of success of three or greater, and the character gains no other benefit from such a success, he or she gains spin. Spin gives a +1 bonus to the next roll.

Stress	There are two types of stress: physical and mental. Physical stress damages a character's Health stress score and mental stress damages a character's Composure stress score. If one of these scores is reduced to zero, a character loses in whatever situation caused the damage. This could be fatal in such circumstances as a fight. Otherwise, stress damage is immediately negated after the situation that caused it. Stress damage can be reduced by opting to take Consequences (above).
Stunt	Stunts alter the rules for skills in certain specific circumstances, generally either giving a bonus, or allowing a skill to do something it could not before.
Storyteller	A name for one of the players of the game. The Storyteller designs the backdrop, the framework for story and all the other characters not controlled by the players.
The Table	All players present, including the Storyteller. Some things in the game are decided by consensus of the Table.
Taken Out	What happens when a character is reduced to zero in a stress score.
Team	A group of participants that acts together in a Contest.
Turn	A flexible unit of time used in Tests lasting over multiple dice rolls during which all players get a chance to say what their characters do and roll some dice. A Test might have many Turns before it is concluded.
Warband	A Warband is a group of minor characters acting together in combat. The entire group only makes one roll for an action and gains bonuses depending on their number. Individuals in a Warband are easily knocked out of a fight.
Zone	Personal combat, when it uses a map, does not track things using exact distances or a grid, but rather a more fluid map dividing the location up into areas called zones.



Name:

Aspects:

Oaths:

Skills:

Level 5

Level 4

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

Stunts:

Health:

Composure:

Refresh Rate:

Languages:

Equipment:



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